

SDG Action Segment for Goal 3



Partnerships to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

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Trusteeship Council Chamber, UNHQ

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SDG ACTION SEGMENT

2025

Organized by

- UNAIDS
- World Health Organization
- Stakeholder Group on Ageing
- Economic Commission for Europe Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism



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Background

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are universal and to be implemented simultaneously and collectively to maximize their impact. Health is, moreover, widely recognized as a precondition, outcome, and indicator of sustainable development, with SDG 3 closely linked to targets across the SDGs. Yet, as we are rapidly approaching 2030, progress towards achieving SDG3 is alarmingly off-track, affected by the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, constrained fiscal space, escalating conflicts, geopolitical tensions, environmental degradation, increased pollution, growing climate crisis, and shifting demographics (e.g. ageing population) and disease burdens (e.g. rise in noncommunicable diseases).

While there have been some notable public health gains since 2015 (e.g. results in combatting communicable diseases, including a decrease in new HIV infections), current progress is only about one third of what is needed to reach the health-related targets by 2030, posing a significant risk for the overall achievement of the SDGs. Progress has stalled in key areas, such as reducing maternal mortality (300,000 deaths a year), and immunization coverage for children under five (2.7 million additional children unvaccinated or under-vaccinated in 2023 compared to 2019) and, despite significant progress towards ending AIDS, the annual 1.3 million of new HIV infections are 3.5 times the target set for 2025. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have become the leading cause of death and disability worldwide, representing 74% of the global burden, with 17 million people dying each year from NCDs before reaching the age of 70. And across SDG3 targets, progress remains uneven, with stark disparities within and among countries, particularly among marginalized and vulnerable populations, including women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants.

Beyond the health sector, the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age have a critical impact on health outcomes, with numerous studies suggesting that social determinants of health account for between 30-55% of health outcomes. In countries at all levels of income, health and illness follow a social gradient: the lower the socioeconomic position, the worse the health.

1 WHO, [Aligning for country impact: 2024 progress report on the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All](#) (Geneva, 2024)

Progress in addressing the specific targets of SDG 3 – to address maternal, neonatal and child mortality, infectious and non-communicable diseases, substance abuse, road traffic injuries, sexual and reproductive health-care services and environmental health – cannot be achieved without universal health coverage (UHC) and strengthening health systems to be fit for purpose. UHC is also critical for our collective response to global threats – including climate change, conflicts, humanitarian crises, health emergencies and pandemics. However, currently UHC remains a distant reality, with 4.5 billion people - over half of the world's population - lacking access to essential health services, and 2 billion people facing financial hardship in accessing such services – a trend that has been worsening due to an increase in out-of-pocket spending on health. Further, the workforce which underpins health systems faces a projected shortfall of 10 million health workers by 2030, primarily in low- and middle-income countries.

UHC can only be achieved with adequate and sustained financing, expanded service coverage and access to health products, as well as a strengthened workforce needed for delivery. Up to 90% of essential interventions for UHC can be delivered using a primary health care (PHC) approach and an estimated 75% of the projected health gains from the SDGs could be achieved through PHC. Prioritizing health in domestic budgets, while ensuring that critical international funding plays a supplementary and complementary role, will be essential for reducing financial hardship caused by out-of-pocket spending and improving health equity. The international community also has a role to play in helping countries to address the debt crisis and expand fiscal space for health, while ensuring alignment of funding with locally determined priorities. Service delivery must be strengthened through integrated health services to better address people's health needs across life phases, including maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, and healthy adulthood and ageing. Addressing the obstacles to equitable access to affordable medicines, vaccines and other health products that can deliver life-saving diagnosis and treatment is also a key component of UHC. This includes making new and innovative treatments accessible globally, such as the new class of long-acting injectable HIV medicines with a game-changing potential for prevention and treatment.

Improving health outcomes starts with health promotion, disease prevention, and addressing the determinants of health. Cross-sectoral policies which lift people out of poverty and promote food security,

safe and affordable housing, access to quality education and jobs with livable wages, as well as clean air, water, sanitation and hygiene, safe use of chemicals, protection from radiation, health-supportive cities and built environments, healthy and safe workplaces, sound agricultural practices, and a preserved nature are all prerequisites for good health. According to WHO, healthier environments could prevent almost one quarter of the global burden of disease. Improving the collection of disaggregated data is also essential for understanding and addressing health inequities – i.e. how health and opportunities for health are distributed, and what factors contribute to or reduce opportunities for good health.

While governments have the primary responsibility to ensure the right to health for all, the reality is that health systems are dependent on an ecosystem of stakeholders across sectors and achieving SDG 3 targets will require a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Stakeholders – from civil society, private sector, academia, multilateral institutions and philanthropic organizations, etc. – play a large role in influencing policy, delivering services, innovating new health products, holding governments accountable, and supplementing government capacity where gaps exist. Partnerships which bring these stakeholders together can leverage their comparative advantages to accelerate progress more efficiently and equitably but must ensure coordination and coherence to avoid fragmentation.

Effective multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral partnerships are essential for accelerating progress on SDG 3, including by tackling inequalities and other determinants of health, mobilizing sustainable financing for health, advancing UHC through PHC, enhancing pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, promoting research, innovation and access to health products and technologies, addressing health needs in fragile settings, and leveraging artificial intelligence and digital health. These will also help advance broader progress across the entire SDGs and support the implementation of the 2023 SDG Declaration and the 2024 Pact for the Future, in addition to the Political Declarations of the health-related High-level Meetings of the UN (NCDs, HIV/AIDS, TB, UHC, PPPR, and AMR).

Objectives of the Segment

- Galvanize momentum for renewing commitment and accelerating efforts by all stakeholders to implement SDG 3 as a precondition for and an

outcome and indicator of all three dimensions of sustainable development.

- Discuss lessons learned and good practices, as well as innovative approaches and strategies, and showcase successful examples of partnerships at all levels that advance sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions to achieve SDG3 and accelerate progress across the SDGs.
- Explore enabling factors that build and scale up multi-stakeholder partnerships, including elements from SDG 17 (finance, technology, data, and capacity building, etc.) and identify ways to improve coordination and alignment among actors and sectors to leverage expertise, fill gaps and improve efficiencies to strengthen systems to deliver health for all.
- Explore linkages with other SDGs and identify new opportunities for new multisectoral partnerships.

Follow-up processes

In addition to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC, other possibilities for strengthening the linkages with SDG 3 include the 58th session of the Commission on Population and Development under the theme “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages”, as well as the preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4). In addition, relevant targets of SDG 3 will be reviewed during the upcoming High-level Meetings of the UN General Assembly on NCDs (2025), HIV/AIDS (2026), Road Safety (2026?), Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (2026), Universal Health Coverage (2027), Tuberculosis (2028), Antimicrobial Resistance (2029).

Resources

- [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024](#)
- [Global Health Observatory](#)
- [Tracking UHC: 2023 Global Monitoring Report](#)
- [Global Health Expenditure Report](#)
- [State of UHC Commitment Review](#)
- [Working for Health Action Plan 2022-2030](#)

- [2024 Global AIDS Report – The Urgency of Now: AIDS at a Crossroads](#)
- [Fact Sheet 2024: Global HIV statistics](#)

Additional information

For more information, please visit the webpage here:
<https://sdgs.un.org/2025ECOSOCPartnershipForum>

Contact

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