

Agenda Item: 34.1

Global Health Council, in collaboration with Global Water 2020, welcomes the opportunity to comment on progress reports presented at the WHA.

We welcome the progress made to date, especially the high-level commitments made by governments to improve WASH in healthcare facilities. We call on Member States to continue to prioritize WASH within national health system plans and within all relevant national ministries, including health, water, and most importantly finance. As noted in the progress report, closing the WASH gap in healthcare facilities requires a modest 30 US cents per capita. We urge Member States to ensure financing for WASH in health system plans to help recover from COVID-19, and to ensure that healthcare facilities are adequately prepared for the next infectious disease outbreak. And as countries in need prioritize this critical health care concern, we urge donor countries to offer the assistance needed to ensure that critical WASH services in healthcare facilities will be sustainably met.

We also welcome the progress report on Sustainable Health Financing Structures and Universal Health Coverage. We support the guidance and training WHO has led over the past decade to ensure governments properly invest in their public health systems. We are pleased to see that WHO and member states continue to put Universal Health Coverage at top of the global health agenda. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that governments are still not investing enough to create strong and resilient health systems to prevent, respond and recover from future pandemics. Moreover, many investments in health systems and services do not reach the furthest behind. We urge member states to create concrete and effective implementation plans to eliminate out-of-pocket private spending on health. We ask that governments increase public financing toward a minimum of 5% GDP or set an appropriate target based on the country and/or regional context. This pandemic has made it clear that the cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of investing in health.