



**Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Eswatini  
to the United Nations**

**Statement by  
Her Excellency Ms. Lizzie Funekile Nkosi  
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Kingdom of Eswatini**

**During the United Nations General Assembly High-Level  
Meeting on Universal Health Coverage**

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**ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC)**  
**THROUGH PRIMARY HEALTH CARE APPROACH IN THE**  
**KINGDOM OF ESWATINI**

The Kingdom of Eswatini has highlighted UHC as the main goal of the National Health Sector Strategic Plan. UHC seeks to ensure that all people living within the Kingdom of Eswatini have access to needed health services, from health promotion and prevention, curative, rehabilitative as well as palliative services. Efforts are being put in place to ensure that these health services are of sufficient quantity as well as of high quality possible, so as to be highly effective. Furthermore, the Government of Eswatini has implemented fiscal policies that minimize the risk of financial hardships among the population, resulting from accessing health services at the time of need. Out of pocket expenditure on health has reduced from 15% in 2005 to 13% in 2018. The primary health care strategy is being implemented in the country, as a pillar for the achievement of UHC by 2030.

Eswatini is implementing the Primary Health care strategy to deliver health care services to the nation and this has proven to still be the viable and relevant strategy for a resilient health system that responds to the health needs of the population. Key strong elements of this strategy in Eswatini include the provision of free health care services at primary care

level, where there are clinics and outreach site. Outreach sites are utilized for hard to reach areas, where access to health facilities is poor, to ensure that no one is left behind. The country is providing highly subsidized tertiary health services at hospital level including referral for specialist care services that are not available in the country.

In order to improve access to health services, Eswatini has invested in an expanded network or coverage of primary health facilities. The service delivery structure is broadened at the base, consisting of clinics which are closer to the communities in the rural areas, where more than 80% of the people reside. It is estimated that 85% of the population reside within 8km of a health facility and emergency medical services are accessible to all people who need them through the toll free number 977.

The Kingdom of Eswatini has a strong community involvement and engagement in the delivery of health care services. More than 4,000 Rural Health Motivators, paid a stipend by government, are assigned homesteads in the chiefdoms, where they do home visits and provide services for health promotion, among other health services. The Rural Health Motivators also link up with the community clinics, where the nurses provide technical support for the services they deliver to the communities. Each clinic has a Community Health Committee that

provides oversight to the health facility and supports the delivery of the services, using funding received from the community levy.

It is worth noting that the primary health care approach has assisted the Kingdom of Eswatini to achieve good outcomes in controlling epidemics such as HIV, TB, and malaria. Through engaging communities and decentralizing services for HIV, TB and malaria to community level, the country has seen an improvement in life expectancy during the 10 year period of 2007 to 2017, from 43.3 to 58.9 years among males and 47.2 to 63.5 years among females.

Although the Kingdom of Eswatini has seen improvement in the maternal mortality ratio from 589 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2007 to 452 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017, strategies for preventing maternal deaths need to be improved to ensure that no mother dies while giving a life. Infant mortality ratio improved from 100 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2007 to 53 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017, however, more efforts need to be put in place to prevent these deaths. We are grateful to partners such the Republic of China (Taiwan) for their support in maternal/child work. Eswatini calls upon The UN to include Taiwan in the UN system as we believe they can greatly contribute to the organisation's work and human welfare.

Though faced with fiscal challenges, the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini continues to enjoy almost free primary health care services. As we continue with the on going survey on the National Health Accounts, more information will be gathered on the financial protection currently received by Emaswati. The survey will give a more accurate figure as well as feed into the process of proposing a national health insurance as part of the social security net.

In conclusion, we believe Primary health care remains the relevant strategy for Universal Health coverage.