**Where are we on UHC in Africa**

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**Abstract**

The Millennium Development era brought together resources globally, particularly in support of prevention and control of communicable diseases and significant progress was made in in the sub-Saharan countries. Although a few countries attained some of the health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is clear that unless the rate of progress is enhanced, most countries in the region would not be able to attain the sustainable development goal 3 (SDG3) targets. The major reason for countries not attaining their health MDGs is weak health systems. To achieve the SDG3, it is critical to attain universal health coverage (UHC) which can only be achieved through strengthened health systems that are able to deliver quality health care and services to the people without leaving anyone behind.

This paper uses a review of available literature through peer reviewed articles on health service coverage in countries in sub-Saharan Africa in addition to Millennium Development Goals reports and the Global health observatory data and analyses the trends of health service coverage to gauge where the African Region is and what trajectory it is taking towards sustainable development goal3. It is noted that significant progress was made in sub-Saharan countries during the MGD era and improvements in intervention coverages and health status were registered. However, there remained glaring inequities, unsustained gains, and poor resilience to shocks as was seen in West Africa during the Ebola Virus Disease epidemic. Even where coverage was high, often the quality of care was below standard. A critical look at the trends in the critical health system inputs like financing and health workforce, paint a grim picture of inadequate progress, at a rate that will not enable the Region to attain universal health coverage and hence neither reach the SDG3. For the African Region to attain SDG3, much greater investment will be required in strengthening health systems so as to achieve universal health coverage.

Key words: health systems, health coverage, equity, quality

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