



**HIS MAJESTY KING MOHAMMED VI  
MAY GOD ASSIST HIM**



# **HM the king Sends Message to Participants in the Celebration of World Health Day (Full Text)**

HM King Mohammed VI sent a message to the participants in the celebration of World Health Day, organized for the year 2019 in Rabat under the theme "Primary health care: a path towards universal health coverage".

Here follows the full text of the royal message, which was read by Health minister, Anass Doukkali:

"Praise be to God,

May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, His Kith and Kin

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I should like to thank the World Health Organization for choosing the Kingdom of Morocco, and more specifically the city of Rabat, to celebrate World Health Day 2019.

I also wish to take this opportunity to commend the considerable efforts made by the WHO, under the stewardship of its Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, to ensure the success of this important international event, in coordination with the Moroccan Government.

I cannot but applaud your choice of theme for the celebration of this year's World Health Day, namely "Primary health care: a path towards universal health coverage". This is because I, myself, attach special importance to the social welfare system, and particularly to the health of the citizens.

The great importance of primary health care services in the health system stems from the fact that those services concern all segments of society. Health care is shaped by the needs and priorities of individuals, families and communities and focusses on interrelated aspects of physical, mental and social health and well-being, be it in terms of guidance, prevention, treatment or rehabilitation.

Primary health care is also predicated on commitment to social justice, equal access to health care and the recognition of people's fundamental right to the attainment of the highest possible level of health, as echoed in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also as enshrined in the Kingdom's Constitution.

Needless to say, it is necessary to make sure adequate financial and human resources are available in the health sector. Over and beyond that, it is important to address the broader determinants of health, including social, economic, environmental and behavioral factors.

This requires the formulation and adoption of sectoral and inter-sectoral policies and measures that take into account these factors as part of the shared responsibility of all health stakeholders. What this means is that the latter must pool efforts and use resources more

effectively.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sure you know that, today, more than half the world's population has no access to primary health care at a time when universal health coverage is of paramount importance, not only to the individual and society, but also to health systems and the international community.

Achieving universal health coverage is not beyond our reach; nor should it be restricted to developed countries. It has been clearly shown that this goal can be achieved, irrespective of a country's level of development.

For this objective to be achieved, however, a number of basic conditions in the health system need to be met. They include the adoption of a drug policy based on the provision of essential medicines on which priority public health programs depend, in addition to the promotion of locally produced generic drugs and quality medical supplies so as to be autonomous in this regard.

In parallel, individuals and families should be better protected financially in order to achieve this goal. Indeed, citizens, especially those with limited incomes, should not have to pay for most of their health care. Countries should work more closely together to ensure greater effectiveness in achieving the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 3 on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-

being for all, at all ages, by 2030 – a goal Morocco, like the rest of the international community, has pledged to achieve.

Several priorities need to be taken into account to achieve universal health coverage, such as epidemiological monitoring, addressing cross-border pandemics, ensuring better health systems, contributing to social and economic development and meeting the needs and expectations of the population in terms of health care and related costs.

Achieving universal health coverage does not hinge on funding only, nor should it depend on the sole efforts of the health sector. In fact, all measures should be taken to ensure fair and equitable access to health care services and achieve sustainable development as well as social inclusion and cohesion.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Primary health care is critical to achieving universal health coverage given the profound changes currently playing out in the world. This represents a challenge not just for health systems, but also for the funding of health insurance plans, for which solidarity-based health insurance mechanisms need to be adopted to cope with growing health risks and costs.

To ensure effective health insurance plans, we need to come up with innovative financing for the services these plans provide, especially at

this time of rising costs, populations ageing at a faster rate, the increase in chronic diseases and the availability of new, more expensive treatments. This means we should, first, identify mechanisms to reduce the squandering of funds and tackle low efficiency.

I should like to emphasize, in this regard, the need to launch a new dynamic in order to overcome the various obstacles and constraints faced. Reforming the primary health care system should be one of the main pillars of this drive, together with the Kingdom of Morocco's commitment to press ahead with efforts to achieve universal health coverage by 2030.

This is the goal we have been seeking to achieve by promoting and implementing social protection policies. At the same time, we are keeping up efforts to ensure the gradual achievement of universal primary health coverage, making sure it benefits citizens from all social strata.

Morocco has made significant strides in this field. Compulsory health coverage was introduced in 2005, and medical assistance for all was achieved in 2012. Moreover, health coverage for migrants was instituted in 2014 and was followed by a health coverage scheme for students enrolled in higher education institutions, both in the public and vocational training sectors. Finally, health coverage was extended to the parents of subscribers from the public sector. Morocco has also taken measures to institute a compulsory insurance system for occupational groups, the self-employed and non-earners.

I urge the Government to speed up the promulgation of legislative, regulatory and implementation instruments concerning the reform of primary health care, and to continue expanding compulsory insurance plans. This should help enhance access to affordable, high-quality health care services at the local level while giving greater prerogatives to local governments as part of advanced regionalization and devolution.

I wish to thank the World Health Organization for constantly supporting the Kingdom's efforts to revamp the national health system, improve the health care services provided to citizens and combat diseases, particularly in the framework of the primary health care reform project and the 2017-2021 Cooperation Strategy signed by Morocco and the World Health Organization.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to take this opportunity to say how much I appreciate the WHO's pioneering role in promoting universal health care.

I keenly look forward to the conclusions and constructive recommendations to be made by this world conference to keep abreast of the current dynamic in this crucial sector.

Before concluding, I would like to welcome our distinguished guests to their second home, Morocco. I wish you a pleasant stay and pray that Almighty God grant you every success.

Thank you.

Wassalamou alaikoum warahmatoullahi wabarakatouh".

MAP 08 avril 2019