

Keeping sexual and reproductive health and rights at the heart of universal health coverage

16 September 2026, 13:30–14:30 CET (Geneva time)

Virtual, via Zoom

CONCEPT NOTE

Universal health coverage (UHC) is founded on the principle that everyone should have access to the health services they need, when and where they need them, without financial hardship. Despite these longstanding global commitments, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services remain insufficiently integrated into UHC in many countries. Essential services are often excluded from health benefit packages, inadequately financed, or inaccessible in practice, undermining health equity and leaving millions of people behind.

This challenge comes at a critical moment. Countries are navigating constrained public finances, competing health priorities and increasing demands on health systems. At the same time, misinformation and polarized public discourse continue to shape perceptions of sexual and reproductive health, making evidence-informed policymaking increasingly challenging. Decisions on what is included or excluded from UHC have therefore become both a health and a political issue. Ensuring that sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are recognized as an integral component of UHC, rather than a separate or optional area of healthcare, is essential to achieving healthier populations, stronger health systems and sustainable development.

Parliamentarians have a unique role to play in addressing these challenges. Through legislation, budget approval, oversight and engagement with their constituencies, they can help ensure that commitments to UHC translate into equitable access to comprehensive, quality sexual and reproductive health services. Their leadership is essential to ensuring that health systems respond to everyone's needs, including the specific needs of women, adolescents and marginalized populations, across the life course.

To support parliamentary action, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Human Reproduction Programme (HRP) have developed the parliamentary brief ***Committing to sexual and reproductive health and rights through universal health coverage: An investment in people***. Building on the IPU's longstanding commitment to UHC, the brief presents evidence on why sexual and reproductive health is fundamental to UHC and outlines practical actions parliamentarians can take to strengthen legislation, financing, oversight and accountability. The brief is also intended to complement the IPU-WHO handbook entitled [*The path towards universal health coverage*](#), providing a focused resource on integrating sexual and reproductive health and rights into parliamentary action to advance UHC.

Bringing together parliamentarians, WHO experts and partner organizations, this webinar will introduce the new parliamentary brief while fostering dialogue on the political choices and parliamentary leadership needed to keep sexual and reproductive health and rights at the heart of UHC.

Key discussion questions

- How can parliamentarians ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights remain a political priority as countries navigate competing health priorities, misinformation and limited resources?

- How can parliamentarians strengthen accountability for sexual and reproductive health and rights within UHC?
- What partnerships are needed to accelerate progress on sexual and reproductive health and rights within UHC?

Objectives

The webinar aims to:

- Introduce the new parliamentary brief *Committing to sexual and reproductive health and rights through universal health coverage: An investment in people*.
- Share parliamentary experiences and country examples that demonstrate how commitments can be translated into action.
- Foster dialogue among parliamentarians on how legislation, financing, oversight and partnerships can strengthen sexual and reproductive health within UHC.

Practical information

This 60-minute webinar is open to parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, WHO HQ, regional and country offices, development partners, civil society organizations and other stakeholders working to advance universal health coverage and sexual and reproductive health.

The webinar will be held in English with simultaneous interpretation in Arabic, French and Spanish.

Provisional programme	
13:30–13:35	Introduction by the moderator
13:35–13:50	Setting the scene: Launching the parliamentary brief <i>Committing to sexual and reproductive health and rights through universal health coverage: An investment in people</i>
13:50–14:25	Panel discussion Followed by interactive discussion with the audience
14:25–14:30	Closing remarks