



# São Paulo Declaration on Self-Care for Universal Health Coverage

We, the Ministers of Health, representatives of Governments, nongovernmental organizations, members of the United for Self-Care Coalition ('the Coalition'), and private sector, gathered here today:

- **Recognizing** the importance of self-care, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), as a fundamental pillar of health and well-being, and the need of integrating it into the continuum of Primary Health Care (PHC),
- **Agreeing** on the importance of health literacy, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), to improve individual and public health,
- **Considering** the growing body of evidence showing that self-care is beneficial for:
  - **Individuals** – self-care empowers individuals to actively manage their health, leading to improved health outcomes and higher quality of life,
  - **Health systems** – self-care helps to reduce unnecessary burden on healthcare systems resulting in savings and improved resource allocation,
  - **Healthcare professionals** – promoting appropriate self-care allows healthcare professionals to re-deploy resources to areas of greatest need.
- **Outlining** the need for raising awareness and implementing policies that endorse self-care as a pivotal element in attaining Universal Health Coverage (UHC), as established by the United Nations General Assembly and the WHO,
- **Acknowledging** the importance of public health policies empowering people for self-care as highlighted in previous regional policies and statements, such as the Policy on integrated care for improved health outcomes of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in 2022, and the First Americas RISE for Health, in 2023,
- **Understanding** the historical existence of self-care practices, especially traditional practices or specific need of native people, and the urgent need for efficient healthcare systems, exacerbated by the prevalence of chronic diseases, aging populations, and the recent global pandemic,
- **Recognizing** and **acknowledging** the value of self-care as an official and legitimate tool to fortify the overall health system sustainability and resilience.

Hereby declare our commitment to:

- **Promote self-care for Primary Health Care and Universal Health Care**

We underscore the importance of strengthening health systems to facilitate and promote self-care interventions, ensuring that they are accessible, affordable, and evidence based. We recognize the potential of self-care to reduce the burden on healthcare services, improve health outcomes, and enhance the overall quality of life for individuals and communities. For this we underscore the need to elevate and integrate self-care practices at all the levels of healthcare systems including primary care level.



- **Support self-care education and awareness**

We emphasize the importance of comprehensive and accurate information on self-care practices, products, and services. We will support public awareness campaigns that foster health literacy, empowering individuals to engage in self-care responsibly and effectively. This includes raising awareness about self-care interventions that address health challenges such as non-communicable diseases, mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and communicable diseases, including responsible self-testing, self-monitoring, self-management, self-medication, consumer centric labelling and communication.

- **Leverage technology and digital solutions**

We acknowledge the potential of digital technologies to enhance self-care interventions, including by helping individuals understand when intervention from a health care professional is needed; facilitating health promotion and empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their health.

- **Strengthen collaboration and partnerships**

We recognize the need for multi-sectoral collaboration to advance self-care and to enhance self-care policy and practice. We encourage the exchange of best practices and lessons learned to accelerate progress in self-care implementation and improve health outcomes for all globally, including effective regulatory frameworks in supporting access to self-care products and options based upon appropriate standards of safety, efficacy and quality.

- **Ensure equity and inclusivity**

We affirm our commitment to promoting equitable access to self-care interventions, ensuring that no one is left behind. We recognize the importance of addressing social determinants of health and gender inequalities, as well as eliminating barriers to self-care faced by vulnerable populations. We will work towards fostering inclusive policies that empower individuals to exercise their right to self-care, irrespective of their background, health or socioeconomic status, geographical location or any other condition.

- **Advocate for better self-care governance**

We commend the focus of the World Health Organization on promoting self-care. We call for the adoption and implementation of a WHO Resolution on Self-Care for Health, to provide a comprehensive framework for governments, stakeholders, and the international community to strengthen self-care policies and interventions. We commit to working together, engaging with the World Health Organization, and promoting policies that enable individuals, families, and communities to embrace self-care as a pathway to better health, well-being, and sustainable development. We encourage implementation of national guidelines that incorporate self-care into healthcare prevention and treatment plans, with a particular focus on community-based primary care.

- **Monitor progress and accountability**

We emphasize the importance of monitoring and evaluating the impact of self-care interventions on health outcomes and health system sustainability. We support the implementation of robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks, leveraging data and evidence-based research to track progress, identify gaps, and inform policy decisions on self-care.

**We, the Ministers of Health, representatives of governments, nongovernmental organizations, members of the Coalition, private sector, recognizing the importance of self-care as a fundamental pillar of health and well-being, affirm our dedication to advancing self-care as an essential component of Universal Health Coverage.**

**Agreed in São Paulo, Brazil in Spanish, Portuguese, and English, on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador

Organismo Andino de Salud - Convenio Hipólito Unanue (ORAS-CONHU)

Ministry of Health of Argentina

Academia Latinoamericana de Pacientes - LAPA

National Directorate of Medicines of El Salvador

Foro Farmacéutico de las Américas - FFA

Panama Ministry of Health

Organización Internacional de Telemedicina y Telesalud - OIT

