

**STATEMENT BY LYDIA SEYRAM ALHASSAN, MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT FOR AYAWASO WEST WUOGON CONSTITUENCY -
ON WORLD HEALTH DAY.**

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Thank you Rt. Hon. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to make a statement in celebration of WORLD HEALTH DAY; a global health awareness day celebrated every year on the 7th of April.

In 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) held the first World Assembly where it decided on 7th April to mark WHO's founding and to use the day to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health each year. The theme for this year's celebration is "Universal Health Care" (UHC), a subject that discusses and advocates for easy access to healthcare within an acceptable distance from the citizen's abode, at a cost that is affordable and tolerable.

Rt.Hon. Speaker, Ghana has made tremendous gains at achieving UHC since the inception of the 4th Republic. In the 1990s, the concept of "Community Based Health Planning Services" (CHPS) was started as a pilot project to ensure that basic healthcare is brought close to the citizen, right at where the citizen is domiciled. Prior to the CHPS project, the health delivery system that was at base, close to the citizen was the Health Centre. Some Health Centres served population of over 50,000 and were at a driving distance of close to an hour in some cases.

This made healthcare inaccessible on most occasions and a challenge to bear even in cases where the facility is reached, due to the number of patients that had to be seen.

The CHPS facility takes care of an average of 5,000 people and is the most decentralized form of healthcare in the country. There are over 6,000 CHPS facilities in Ghana now. The concept has made healthcare in terms of physical facilities almost universal. The challenge with Ghana's quest to achieving universal healthcare now is in the staffing of these health facilities and the machinery to enable the CHPS centres fully functional and highly efficient as service delivery centres.

The recent clearance for the employment of 53,681 health workers, majority of whom are nurses has significantly contributed in addressing the staffing challenges.(Source:[GHS 16,502 (2017), 11,018 (2018), 26,161 (2019)])

The World Bank in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Ghana Health Service, and the National Health Insurance Authority is in the process of engineering an arrangement and that would ensure that every Ghanaian receives healthcare at the CHPS level with or without financial wherewithal.

This Mr. Speaker, is the last piece of the UHC puzzle that would make healthcare in Ghana truly universal and make true the mantra of the Ghana Health Service- “Your Health – Our Concern”.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, access to quality and affordable healthcare is a right and not a privilege. Access is a means of creating a strong productive workforce, fit in the body and creative in the mind, well positioned to deliver a vibrant, resilient and progressive society. Mr. Speaker, UHC is not just an issue of the health of citizens, it is in fact a matter of the strength of the country, captured in the health of its people anchored in the quality of their thinking.

The pursuit of UHC for all Ghanaians by 2020 by the Ministry of Health with the blessing of H.E Nana Akufo – Addo is workable, possible and achievable. The reinvigoration of that pursuit is right in this discussion, right in this house. I salute all gallant workers who live their lives daily promoting healthy living, salvaging the sick and caring for the debilitated.

Rt. Hon. Speaker thank you once again, I’m grateful.

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