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## **“We are the same people!” - Putting people, not diseases, first for UHC in Africa**

Language English

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The NCD Alliance convened several NCD Cafe sessions and a side event at the impressive Africa Health Agenda International Conference, hosted by Amref Health Africa and the Rwanda Ministry of Health at the Kigali Convention Centre from 5-7 March 2019. The conference has become the biggest health-focused gathering on the continent, attracting over 1500 delegates to discuss pathways to achieving universal health coverage (UHC) in Africa by 2030.

NCD Alliance's event focused on how UHC can be established to respond to the growing challenge of multimorbidity and NCDs. As one participant explained, ***“In KwaZulu-Natal, the same person who has TB, might have diabetes. The person with HIV has not one NCD but multiple comorbidities. The patient queuing for HIV treatment, also has to queue for TB treatment, and might be a pregnant mother... We are the same people!”***

By 2030, NCDs in Africa are projected by WHO to exceed deaths due to communicable, maternal, perinatal and nutritional diseases combined. Further research is needed into the number of people living with multiple chronic conditions as estimates vary from 13-95% of patients worldwide affected by “multimorbidity”.

Our panellists - **Dr Zipporah Ali** of the Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care Association (KEHPCA), **Katja Iversen**, President/CEO of Women Deliver, **Catherine Levy**, Head of Global Health Programmes for NCDs for Sanofi Global Health, **Joshua Makubu** of the Ghana Society of the Physically Disabled and Ghana NCD Alliance, **Dr Eva Njenga**, Chair of NCD Alliance Kenya, and **Dr Gang Sun**, Senior advisor and UHC Focal point at UNAIDS - agreed on the urgent need to move past those silos and make sure that Health Coverage becomes genuinely Universal.

The session reached a strong consensus that health advocates must work together more systematically. As Katja Iversen put it, ***“The UHC deal is not yet done. It is not about slicing the cake for different diseases. The cake isn't baked yet, we haven't even got the ingredients together! The funding is not yet there.”*** Advocates across global health must work together and stand united for a common set of priorities for all communities, to make a success of the forthcoming UN High Level Meeting on UHC.

For more info follow #AHAIC2019 and #AfricaHealth2019

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