



**GLOBAL
INNOVATION HUB**
for Improving Value in Health

**From Declaration to Action: Insights
into Challenges and Enablers Affecting
National Implementation of Global
Healthcare Declarations**





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Executive Summary

Global health declarations are frequently used by countries to signal political commitment, align around shared priorities, and elevate health issues on international agendas. The extent to which these non-binding declarations translate into concrete national policies and measurable population health outcomes remains variable. This summary note examines why implementation gaps persist and identifies practical actions that can make it more likely that national policy action follows global declarations.

Drawing on desk research, structured panel discussions, and interviews with subject matter experts, the analysis focuses on non-binding multilateral health declarations and the national conditions that shape their translation into policy. While international forums provide important platforms for commitment-setting (the United Nations Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage being one example), evidence suggests persistent discrepancies between endorsement and national delivery. These gaps represent lost opportunities to improve health outcomes, inefficient use of resources, and weakened credibility of global processes.

The findings indicate that implementation success is primarily determined by countries' internal governance dynamics. Key barriers include limited whole-of-government alignment, insufficient multi-sectoral coordination, and variable openness to collaboration with international organizations and the private sector. Countries with lower institutional maturity can struggle to convert broad commitments into actionable national policies, particularly where responsibilities are fragmented and accountability mechanisms are weak.

The analysis also identifies enablers to support more effective translation of global commitments. Strong national alignment around multi-sectoral operating models is critical, given that many health objectives depend on policy action beyond the health sector alone. Clear governance structures, defined accountability arrangements, and regular review mechanisms improve coherence and reduce duplication. Saudi Arabia's multi-sectoral approach to antimicrobial resistance (AMR), led through a national committee under a One Health framework, illustrates how coordinated governance can support delivery of international commitments.

Engagement with international organizations further enhances national implementation capacity. Organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) provide normative guidance, technical expertise, and platforms for shared learning that help countries contextualize global commitments within national priorities. Proactive and sustained dialogue with these institutions strengthens policy design, supports implementation, and enables countries to demonstrate progress at the global level.

Private sector participation also plays a critical role in accelerating delivery when aligned with national priorities. Public-private partnership models, such as Saudi Arabia's Wasfaty initiative for medicine access, demonstrate how private sector delivery capacity can be leveraged to improve service access while supporting progress toward international health commitments.

The note concludes that while global health declarations serve important agenda-setting and signaling functions, their impact ultimately depends on national delivery. Improving implementation requires deliberate investment in multi-sectoral governance, openness to international collaboration, and structured engagement with the private sector. By aligning global commitments with national priorities, governance structures, and delivery mechanisms, countries can move beyond endorsement toward tangible, high-value outcomes for populations.

Introduction

Purpose, scope, and objectives

This summary note aims to answer the question “What can be done to make it more likely that actions (national policies) will follow declarations?” through examining the extent to which countries translate non-binding declarations into national policies and to identify the barriers hindering implementation and outline the enablers supporting effective translation into national action. The note also highlights practical recommendations and shows examples of successful policy adoption at the national level aligned globally.

To build a robust and evidence-informed narrative, this note draws on multiple sources: desk research, structured panel discussions, and interviews with subject matter experts. These inputs collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of how global declarations can be operationalized within diverse national contexts.

Context

While countries frequently commit to global non-binding declarations, the level of national implementation varies significantly due to government dynamics and coherence, level of openness to collaboration with external stakeholders such as the private sector and international organizations, and geopolitical and economic stability.

International arenas and forums are usually the venues in which countries declare and share such commitments. One example is in universal health coverage (UHC), where United Nations member states endorsed a Political Declaration on UHC in 2019 to mobilize political commitment and renewed their endorsement in 2023. According to the *2025 Act for UHC Report*¹, there are still discrepancies in translating that into national policies delivering tangible benefits.

¹ World Health Organization. *ACT for UHC 2025 Report*. Geneva: World Health Organization

Country-specific Approaches

Countries' understanding of their priorities is critical, as no two national contexts are identical. Effective implementation of global commitments requires governments to operate according to models that deliver the best level of coherence that translates international commitments into national policies delivers the intended outcome. The government's ability to consider the strength points that they can build on and the position unique to the local priorities serves in translating the endorsed declarations into national policies, delivering the intended outcomes.

Challenges and Barriers

Government maturity and ability to work collectively could be seen as a challenge since not all countries have that level of coherence at the government level. This point is the overarching umbrella of many other challenges that may hinder achievements, such as openness to dialogue and collaboration with international organizations and private sector entities to work collectively. Such partnerships help shape context-specific policy models that reinforce global commitments while remaining grounded in local realities.

Enablers

There is no single approach that suits all countries and governments. Governments considering working on delivering outcomes need to capitalize on the assets and the unique position they possess.

National alignment on a multi-sectoral approach

Effective translation of global declarations requires national policies that deliver measurable value to the population, reflecting progress at the international level. Achieving such coherence is built on strong multi-sectoral governmental alignment

as many healthcare-related goals are achieved not only by health ministries or authorities, but through a holistic approach. This requires a national alignment on the government level to enable working on other enabling points.

Multi-sectoral governmental alignment hinges on a clear governance structure and accountability matrix with a goal-oriented mindset. For example, inter-ministerial collaboration and periodic review of policy effectiveness are essential for ensuring sustained influence and maximizing policy impact. An example is Saudi Arabia's approach to a specific healthcare international commitment about antimicrobial resistance (AMR), where a multi-sectoral AMR committee was formed, comprising government entities, academia, research institutions, the private sector, and non-profit organizations, under the leadership of the Public Health Authority. This coordinated model aims to condense and align efforts nationally to reduce duplication of work and to deliver value to beneficiaries and to serve the declared commitment for AMR through a One Health approach.

International Organizations Interaction

International organizations vary in their mandates, modalities, and operating frameworks, yet play important roles in supporting national translation of global commitments into outcomes. Openness to collaborating with international organizations is helpful for drawing up national policies to both deliver value to people and to showcase progress on the international level. For example, WHO provides normative guidance, technical support, and strategic dialogue that helps countries contextualize global commitments within their national frameworks. Saudi Arabia's proactive engagement with WHO illustrates how constructive dialogue can support the development of policies that align global commitments with local realities. WHO supported Saudi Arabia in multiple areas, including policy advice, technical support, strategic support, and coordination for UN Health-related SDGs, topped by creating a country cooperation strategy.

Public-Private Partnership

The private sector can be a critical partner in accelerating national implementation of policies that contribute to global health commitments. One successful example of partnership with the private sector in healthcare is Wasfaty project, an example of public-private-partnership in Saudi Arabia between the Ministry of Health and private community pharmacies. The project focuses on improving access to medicine for patients of governmental primary care centers. Wasfaty provides medications through private community pharmacies rather than providing them through the primary centers' pharmacies.

This example showcases how a partnership with the private sector, if aligned with the national priorities, such as access to medicine, enables governments to progress on achieving international commitments.

Recommendations

Countries wishing to drive stronger delivery on global health declarations should:

- Strengthen national alignment on the operating model, focusing on a multi-sectoral approach, taking into consideration the local priorities to reflect the global commitments.
- Foster learning and cooperative approach with international organizations to provide subject matter expertise on topics of relevance.
- Adopt an active public-private partnership model that leverages the private sector's capacity to deliver value.

Conclusion

This discussion associates the gap between countries' commitment to global declarations and their level of capacity to translate these commitments into effective national policies, especially in a critical time that is characterized by uncertainties, where dramatic changes are happening. First, governments' ability to align national priorities with the global objectives and operationalize them through an effective governance structure is key. Approaching these priorities through multi-sectoral approaches is required. A second factor is the government's openness to collaboration with international organizations. International organizations can provide relevant technical support by leveraging learning from other governments. Finally, the ability to include the private sector to bear some responsibilities in delivering value supporting the country's direction is a cornerstone in effectively achieving international commitments.

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