



# The role of national public health institutes in promoting health equity: Lessons learned from Cambodia

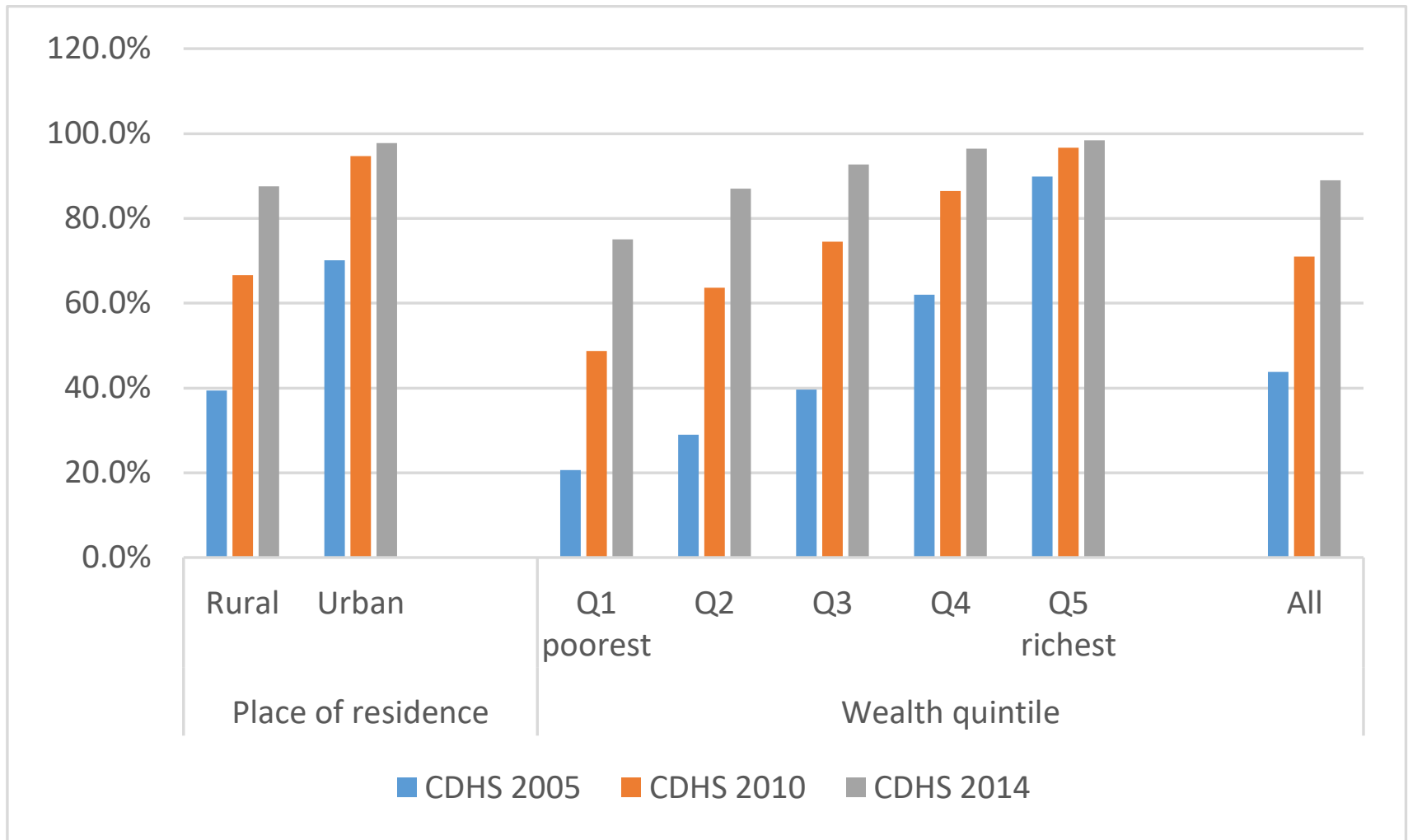
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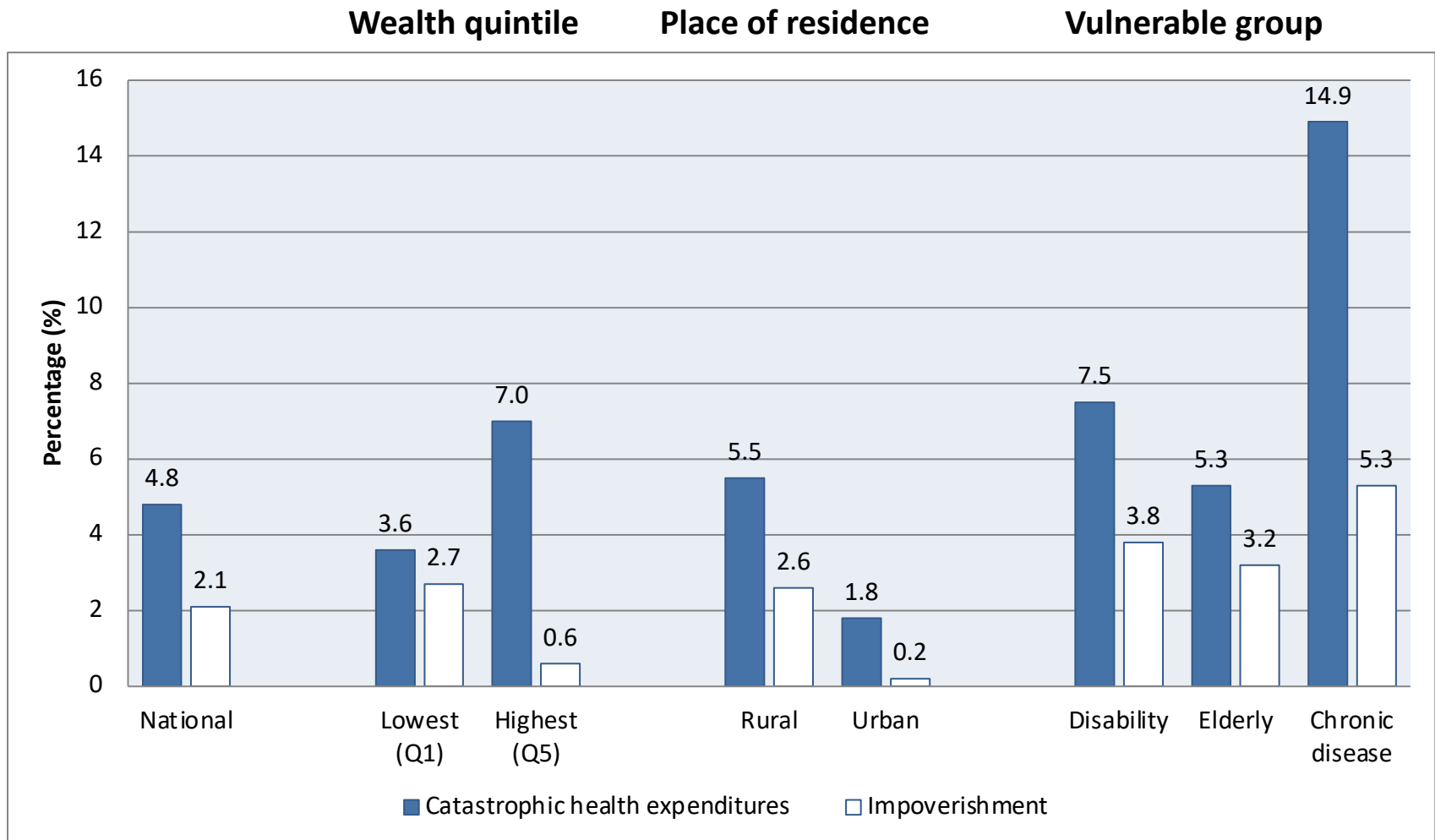
# Background (1)

- In recent decades, Cambodia made tremendous progress in improving health care coverage, health and financial protection, and achieved all health MDG targets, except TB
- But inequalities in health care, health status and financial protection persist

# Skilled birth attendance: Significant improvement but urban-rural and poor-rich gaps remain significant



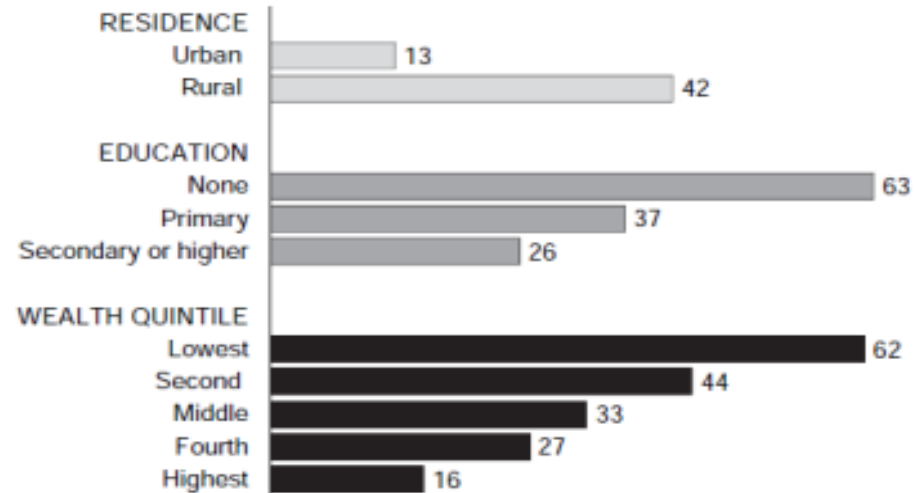
**Catastrophic health expenditures and impoverishment (% of households):  
Rural, old, disabled population and those with NCDs are at higher risk**



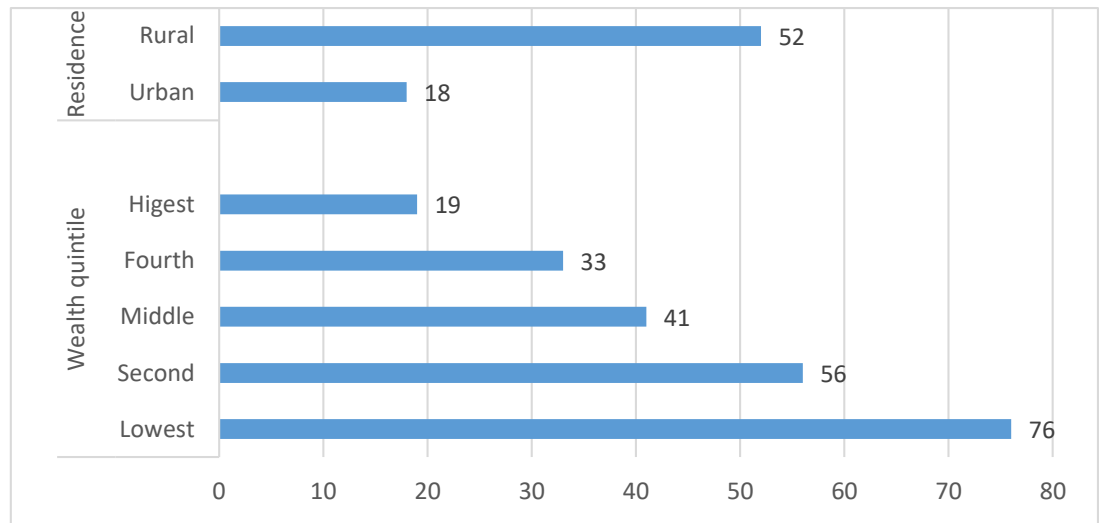
Source: CSES 2014

# Inequities in health outcomes

Infant mortality rate  
Deaths per 1,000 live births

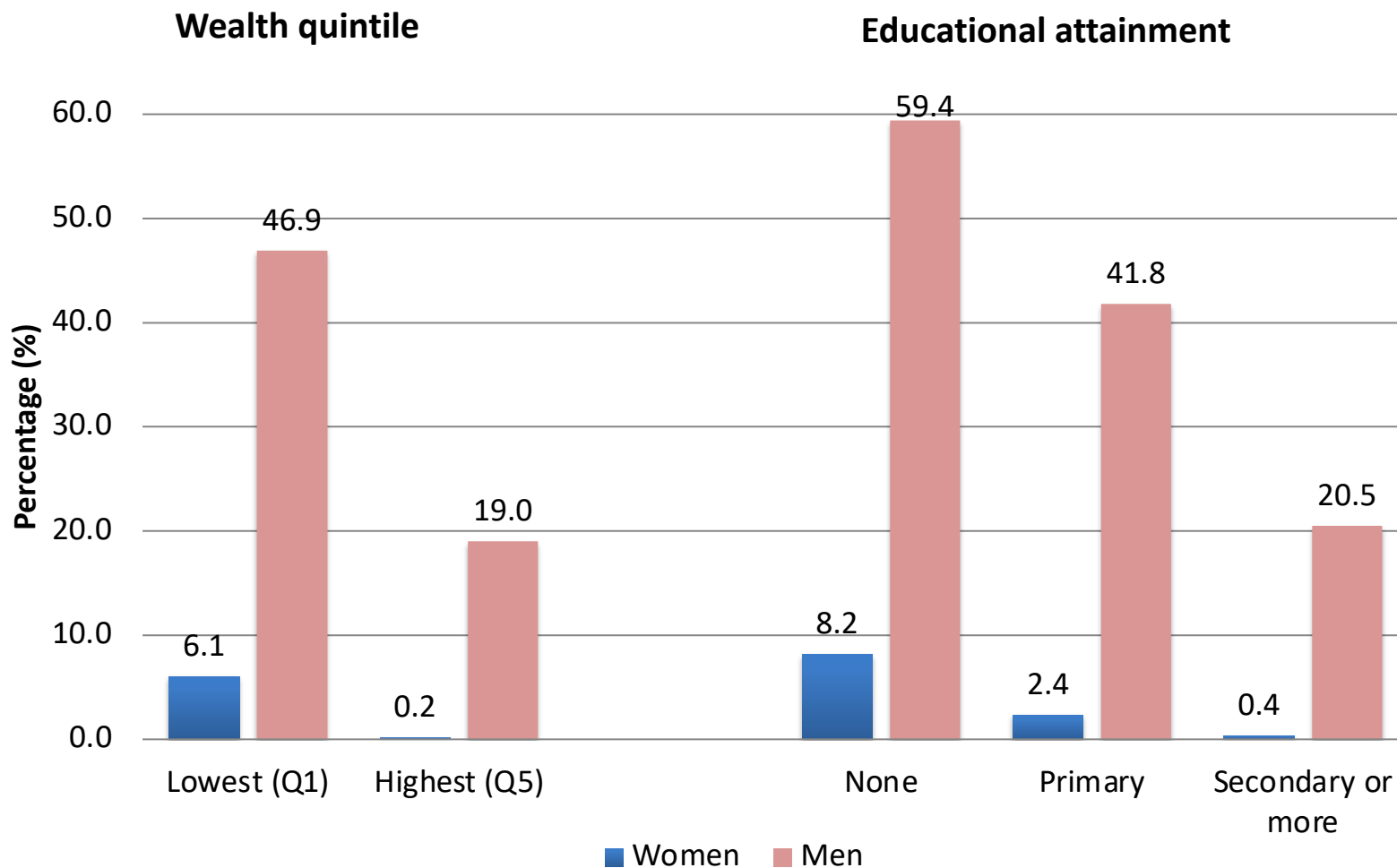


Under-five mortality rate  
Deaths per 1,000 live births



Source: CDHS 2014

**Risk factors - Smoke cigarettes:**  
**% of women and men age 15-49 in Cambodia, 2014**



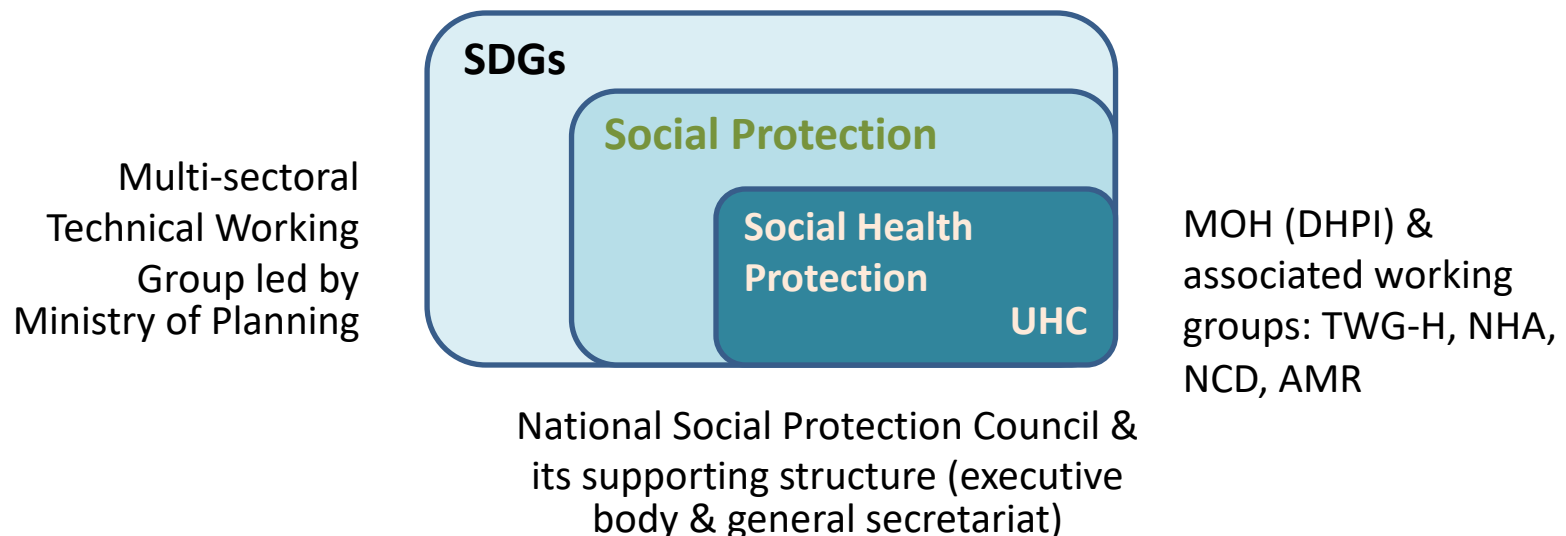
Source: CDHS, 2014.

## Background (2)

- Addressing these health inequalities is necessary to:
  - Further improve health care coverage, health status and financial protection
  - Achieve UHC and SDGs and
  - Preserve social justice/human rights
- This requires better governance for health equity and health inequality monitoring

# Health Equity Governance

- Health Equity has been central to the government policies:
  - Constitution, article 73 – free medical care for the poor
  - Health Strategic Plan 2016-2020 – promoting health and wellbeing for all
  - National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025: UHC
- A number of existing multi-sectoral institutional mechanisms & structure for SDGs, social protection, UHC...
- But no health equity specific country multi-sectoral mechanisms, and structure and systematic means to monitor health inequalities yet





# National Institute of Public Health (NIPH)

- A semi-autonomous public health institute in Cambodia
- NIPH mandate includes 3 main functions:
  - Public health laboratory, serving as the national reference laboratory;
  - Public health teaching & training, including MPH and MSc programs in Epidemiology, Nutrition and Hospital Administration; and
  - Public health/health systems research & policy support

## NIPH contribution to promoting health equity (1)

- Organizing and participating in a number of national and international workshops to raise awareness and deepen understanding of health equity issues among key stakeholders
- Joining with WHO and MOH to conduct an equity situation analysis to provide a basis for informing joint actions to promote health equity:
  - Setting up multi-sectorial institutional mechanisms & structure for health equity governance
  - Developing health equity monitoring system as part of SDG/UHC M&E
  - Developing specific multi-sectorial action plans to address health inequalities and advancing SDG/UHC progress
- Creating a team and build their capacity in analysis of national survey data (CDHS & CSES) for equity monitoring as part of SDG/UHC M&E framework

## NIPH contribution to promoting health equity (2)

- To support the National Social Protection Council in computing UHC indicators with necessary equity stratification
- Develop a course on UHC and health equity as part of its master programs
- Promoting health equity and introducing equity concepts as an integral component of management and leadership training for hospital and health center managers
- Setting up network with hospitals and health centers managers to improve equitable health services
- Health equity is considered a priority area for health systems research, and a number of equity oriented research conducted,
  - e.g. System-wide analysis of health financing equity in Cambodia

## What can be learned so far?

- National Public Health Institutes, like NIPH, can play a crucial role in promoting health equity through a number of equity oriented actions:
  - Training and capacity building
  - Research
  - Technical support (in equity analysis and monitoring)
  - Developing equity network among health managers and policy makers
  - Organizing workshops to raise their awareness and deepen understanding about the importance of health equity, related problems and solutions
- Setting up an effective equity governance and monitoring system with local capacity is key to sustainably improving country health equity and achieving UHC
- However, it is challenging and takes time to see results, as it requires a multi-sectorial approach which is much beyond the health sector responsibility