Republic of Costa Rica

Positions for Group of 77

1. **Addressing Economic Barriers to Accessible and Quality Healthcare in Developing Member States**

The Republic of Costa Rica acknowledges the importance of quality and accessible healthcare for all citizens. In fact, Costa Rica’s healthcare system is one of the few in Latin America to offer almost complete universal coverage. Furthermore, in 2018, President Carlos Alvarado, highlighted how Costa Rica had become the first country to declare peace with the world through the dissolution of its permanent army in favor of investment in the environment, education, and health. Costa Rica’s constitution specifically states in Article 21 the right to life which guarantees the right to protection in terms of health within the human rights doctrine. Given this information, Costa Rica affirms that healthcare for all citizens should be a major priority for all Member States.

Nationally, Costa Rica has made strides in making quality healthcare more accessible to all of its citizens. For instance, according to the 2011 Census, 86% of Costa Ricans (which includes 96% of older adults) are covered by the public health insurance and care system. Additionally, Costa Ricans are eligible for universal insurance at all ages. This progress in health care is due in part because of multidisciplinary teams that are integrated within the communities’ primary health care (PHC) teams known as an equipo básico de atención integral de salud (EBAIS). Furthermore, “health areas” are granted to the EBAIS with PHC units that are composed of nutritionists, psychiatrists, and pharmacists which provide care to 30,000 to 110,000 residents at five to 15 EBAIS clinics. Costa Rica also engages with “geographic empanelment” which consists of assigning all citizens to an EBAIS team that promotes access and continuity of care. These teams provide help beginning in the country’s most medically underserved rural areas and then moving onto the urban areas. Unquestionably, Costa Rica has improved the quality of healthcarewhile spending less on healthcare than the world average; Costa Rice spent 7.6 percent of its GDP on healthcare versus the global average of 10 percent in 2016. Recently, President Alvarado asked for a global program to pool rights to technologies that are useful for the detection, prevention, control, and treatment to combat the current Covid-19 pandemic. In brief, Costa Rica is proposing that the World Health Organization develop a memorandum in which there are shared rights in technologies funded by the public sector and other relevant actors, and reach out to the WHO Member States, non-profit institutions, and industries.

Overall, the current aim of Costa Rica is to provide substantial progress on a technology platform that aims to lift barriers of access to effective vaccines, medicines, and other health products against COVID-19. Clearly, adding wide-scale technology improvements would help the developing Member States with population data in order to improve the overall health system and ensure high-quality care. It is critical that Member States show strong support for these propositions because it would benefit their citizens. Thus, Costa Rica invites Member States to a periodic forum where issues of the promotion of technology are addressed and ideas are elaborated on how to best provide healthcare to the rural areas where there is a severe lack of accessible and quality healthcare. In addition, there needs to be financial investments in digital infrastructures, such as with laptops and tablets in order to impact families who have a lack of critical resources that would allow them to receive digital and virtual advice from trained professionals at a distance for routine check-ups. Also, investing in drones in order to deliver medicine to the most needed populations where there might be a lack of roads would be beneficial along with the promotion of e-medicine. Evidently, theintegration of digital technologieswould create an electronic health record that helps facilitate the accessibility of healthcare and the delivery of comprehensive care to patients in poor and rural areas. Such populations would normally not receive adequate health guidance or even attention; integrating digital technologies would help achieve the ultimate goal to provide quality and accessible healthcare to all people.

1. **Promoting Youth Employment and Opportunity in a Post-Pandemic Economy**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Costa Rica has seen unprecedented rates of unemployment. In June of 2021, Costa Rica reported a 40.6% unemployment rate for youth between the ages of 15 through 25. According to the OECD, female youth unemployment rates reached 50.1% while male youth unemployment reached 33.4%. The data for “Not in Employment, Education, or Training” (NEET) data indicated that 17.9% of Costa Rican youth were in such a predicament. During the pandemic, Costa Rican youth have struggled from a lack of jobs, training, and useful education opportunities. Therefore, the Republic of Costa Rica views youth unemployment as a serious issue and has worked towards alleviating the unemployment problem and creating future opportunities for the youth.

Costa Rica recognizes the importance of job opportunities and youth employment. Thus, Costa Rica has adopted programs like the Sustainable Development Goals Fund which combines 16 UN agencies, universities, and private sectors to enhance youth employment between the ages of 15 through 35. This program focuses on women by providing employment services and training. Additionally, the project also works towards making stronger and longer lasting policies that address high unemployment rates. Costa Rica has acted by including policies that encourage youth employment, creating a platform for youth and government officials to discuss the issues of unemployment, and providing more information on the labor market. Recently, Costa Rica was approved for a $1.7 billion extended arrangement from the International Monetary Fund. The President of Costa Rica, Carlos Alvarado Quesada, plans to use the funds to create jobs in childcare and elderly facilities to help increase youth employment especially directed towards female youth unemployment. Since there has been a decrease in foreign investment internationally, Costa Rica and IMF have suggested more international exchanges which would benefit the opportunities and economies of Costa Rica and its economic partners.

Unemployment can put a strain on human capital, which can negatively impact individuals living in these conditions but also hurt the stability of the whole economy. Therefore, Costa Rica suggests a program funded by the UN sectors and its partners called “Y.O.U.T.H”. It stands for **Youth Education** which provides youth with more education opportunities in the post-pandemic period. Checkpoints should be established to make sure the content is well designed and appropriately received by students. **Opportunities** as in the **creation of new jobs** which include making connections with neighboring Member States and building new infrastructure projects**.** **Ushering in new policies** to support youth employment by providing information on the labor market as well as involving the local governments in playing a more vigorous role in promoting policies. **Training** which involves enhancing the skill sets especially in the technical and scientific fields or whichever other fields that are lacking. For example, since Costa Rica is highly dependent on tourism, so it is essential to educate the locals on the popular languages of those who are likely to travel as it becomes more frequent post-pandemic. **Helping build international networks** tied to development and exchange of new skills, education methods, and training styles for a more competitive youth in the labor market. We invite other Member states to join us in the endeavor to promote youth employment in a post-pandemic economy.