

# The politics of universal health coverage – a question of willpower ?

14<sup>th</sup> National Health Summit

Dublin

8<sup>th</sup> February 2018

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# What is Universal Health Coverage?

A simple definition on UHC:

All people receive the quality health services they need without suffering financial hardship

# UHC is fundamentally about EQUITY

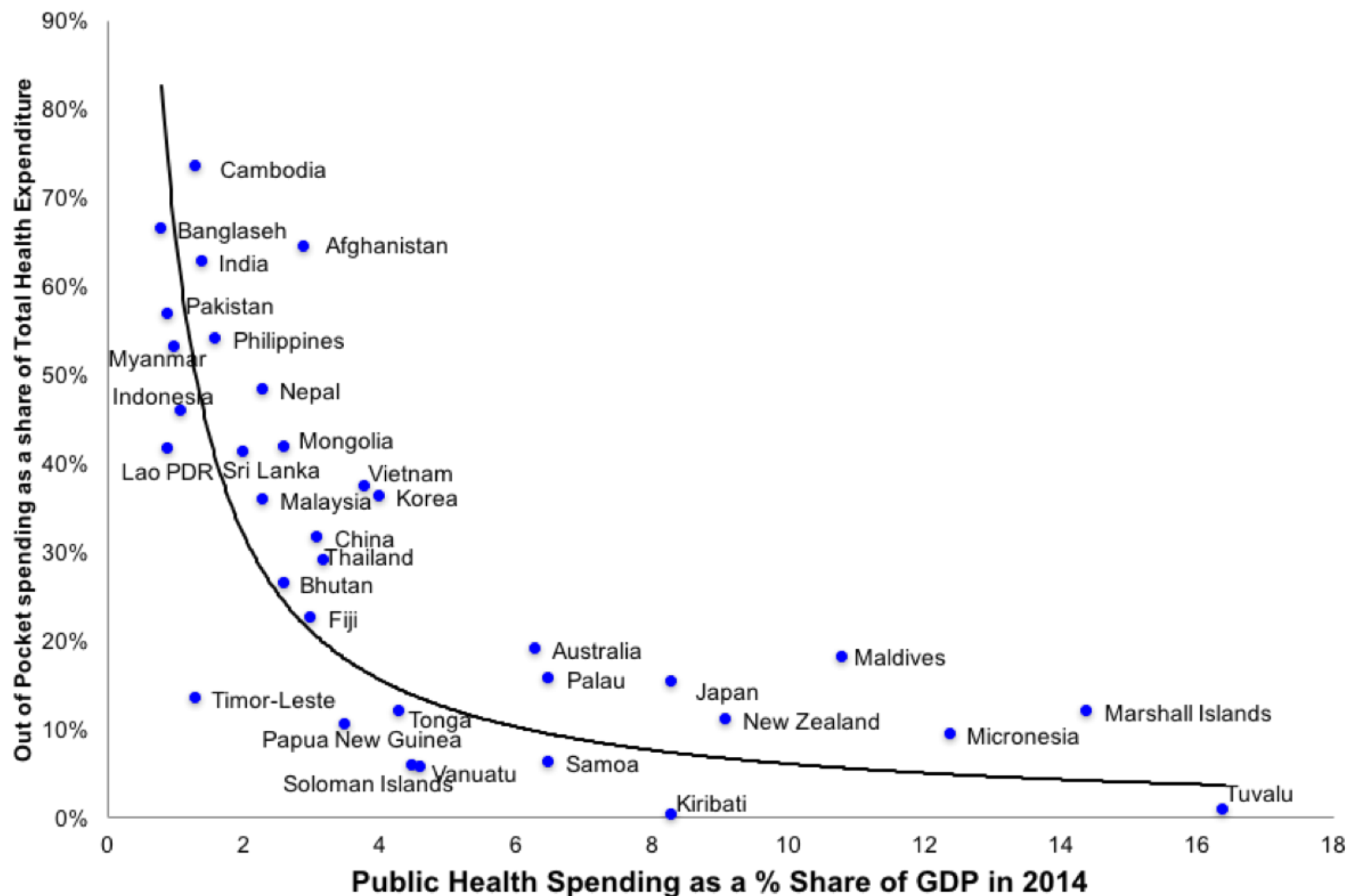
- Universal = Everybody. Nobody left behind
- Health services allocated according to need
- Health financing contributions according to one's ability to pay
- Healthy-wealthy cross-subsidise the sick and the poor

# Global lessons on health financing for UHC

- Market-driven privately financed health systems do not result in UHC
- The state must force the healthy-wealthy to cross subsidise the sick and the poor
- The state must be heavily involved in all three main financing functions of raising revenues, pooling and purchasing services
- Replace private voluntary financing with compulsory public financing - this process is inherently political !

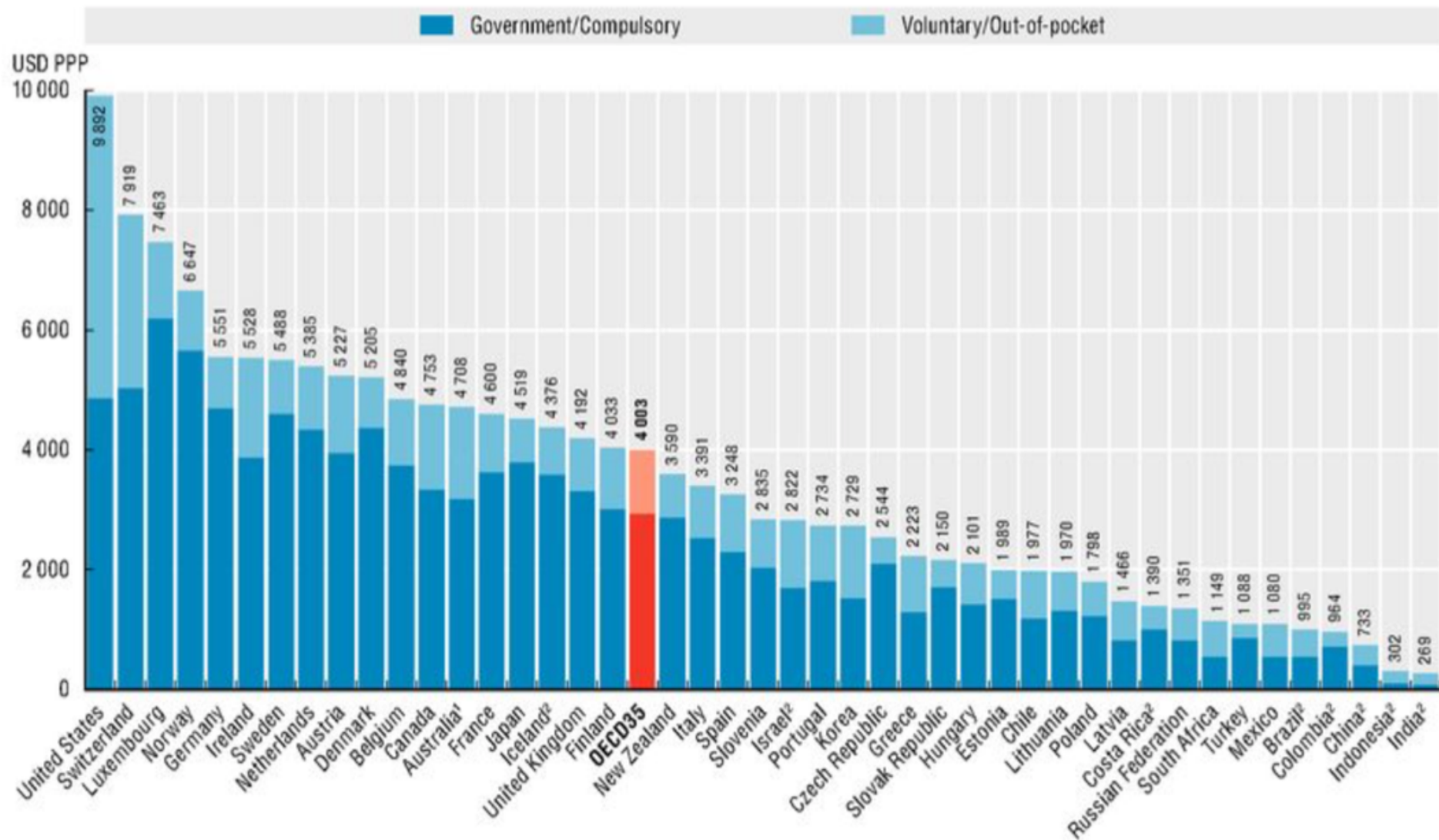


## Public Health Financing Replacing Out-of-Pocket Expenditure in Asia



# Health Financing Transitions in the OECD

7.1. Health expenditure per capita, 2016 (or nearest year)



# WHO's new DG is targeting political leaders

## WHO Director General says political will is needed to transform African health systems

WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus says universal health coverage is his ultimate priority - however it will require enagement with political leaders.




© Picture alliance/dpa/M. Kappeler

# Why do people and politicians like UHC

- Everybody wants good quality health services with financial protection
- It is an end in itself “In place of fear”
- UHC is very easy to understand and sell to electorates – people demonstrate for it
- UHC and health systems reforms can deliver nationwide results quickly bringing political benefits
- Leadership from the Head of State is essential





Children's Hospital Freetown, Sierra Leone  
8 a.m. Tuesday 27 April 2010



# UHC leaders can become national heroes



Tommy Douglas  
"Greatest ever  
Canadian"



Aneurin Bevan  
Founder of the NHS

# We British Love Our NHS





This love can be exploited





# Opposition to UHC will always remain

## The Telegraph

The letters NHS stand for a litany of blame, waste and pessimism

Far from being the envy of the world, our health service is one of our great post-war failures



By Charles Moore

10:01PM GMT 30 Jan 2015

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### Comments

Fifty years ago yesterday, along with hundreds of thousands of others, I watched Winston Churchill's body pass through London.

We were on a balcony in Whitehall. I was eight years old. Everything was military. The route was lined by servicemen. The coffin, wrapped in the Union flag, lay on a gun carriage. All this was fitting, of course, for the man who had served in the Army, run the Navy and then led us to victory in our greatest war. But the problems with which all Churchill's



*Telegraph* article attacking the NHS and NHS workers

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*Telegraph* advert selling their brand of private healthcare

PM Thaksin became a hero in Thailand when he brought the people UHC in 2002





# Kofi Annan discusses UHC with the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo

Chair of The Elders Kofi Annan holds talks with Indonesian President Joko Widodo ahead of the Bali Democracy Forum, with discussion focusing on key topics including Universal Health Coverage.



# Does South Africa have sufficient political commitment to launch UHC?

## **MOTSOALEDI: NHI PAPERS READY FOR CABINET**

The white paper on the National Health Insurance scheme is ready to be presented to government.





# A golden opportunity for UHC in the USA



# Ireland's UHC Strategy

## Health left 'f\*\*\*ed' due to budgets - Varadkar



News Election 2016



1 Q

*Leo Varadkar. Photo: Caroline Quinn*



Niall O'Connor



April 2 2016 2:30 AM



The Department of Health has been left "f\*\*\*ed" as a result of consecutive budget shortfalls, Leo Varadkar has said.



# Chatham House UHC Policy Forum



 **Rob Yates**  
@yates\_rob

Inspiring meeting with [@DrTedros](#) on generating political commitment for [#UHC](#)



## Concluding thoughts

- UHC is mostly political especially introducing an equitable public financing system
- UHC is popular with people and politicians across the world – it brings politics into health systems
- Worldwide political actors are the main driving force behind UHC
- The global health community needs to raise its game in engaging in the political economy of UHC



