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## A3. Importance of social determinants of health

The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age (20). Their circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources globally, nationally and locally. The social determinants of health are responsible for most health inequity – the unfair, avoidable differences in health status within and between countries. Inequity is seen, for example, in determinants such as safe, affordable housing, safe water, hygiene and sanitation, access to education, public safety, food security and nutrition, public health services, pollution free environment.

The health system itself is an important determinant of health. If it is designed appropriately and adequately resourced, it can help to remove wider inequities that affect health service coverage, financial protection and outcomes. Nevertheless, even a robust, equitable health system cannot correct all the social determinants of health, which will require systematic examination of health in all public policies, for which the WHO action framework (health in all policies) (21) seeks synergies and avoidance of harmful health impacts in order to improve population health and health equity. Thus, social determinants of health and “health in all policies” are integral to realizing the UHC goals, and budgetary resources for social determinants of health may be as crucial as those committed to overcome health inequities.