FIGO statements to 75th session of WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia

8.5 Accelerating the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem: Towards achieving 90–70–90 targets by 2030 (SEA/RC75/12)

The International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics welcomes WHO’s Global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem.

Despite advances in HPV testing, including HPV DNA testing, and vaccination, more than half a million women are diagnosed each year, and over a quarter of a million die from the disease. An estimated 34% of cervical cancer deaths globally occurred in the WHO South-East Asia Region, where it is the third most common cause of cancer.

Gaps in the prevention and elimination of cervical cancer exist worldwide in professional and community education, sustainability of prevention strategies, and coordination of implementation programmes.

We urge Member States to invest in these areas to ensure access to cervical cancer screening programmes and robust HPV vaccination. Significant steps have been taken in the South-East Asia region in recent years, with nationwide introduction of HPV vaccine in Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Maldives, and Myanmar, and further expansion or pilot projects ongoing or planned in countries across the region. It is hoped that, with continuing research into single-dose vaccination, as well as the development of new vaccines soon to be available on the market, the path towards elimination will be further accelerated, both here and across the globe.

Through our deep and expansive reach into the gynaecological community, FIGO is committed to supporting and collaborating on these efforts. We are already undertaking project work in LMICs around the world, including India and Nepal, where pilot studies are ongoing into the efficacy of targeted advocacy and training, in addition to self-sampling and vaccination.

Cervical cancer is a disease that can be prevented – and eliminated – only if the global community truly recognises the value of the lives and health of women.