

International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)

Agenda 9.2- SEAHEARTS: Accelerating prevention and control of cardiovascular diseases in the WHO South-East Asia Region

IFMSA welcomes the launch of SEAHEARTS, a vital initiative to accelerate prevention and control of CVDs in the South-East Asia Region. CVDs remain the leading cause of death worldwide, responsible for 17.9 million deaths annually. In this Region, they account for more than a quarter of all deaths, many premature and concentrated among young, economically productive populations, worsening inequities and hindering sustainable development.

In alignment with IFMSA's NCD Policy, we stress that insufficient primary prevention, inequitable access to essential medicines, and limited community-level engagement remain significant barriers to progress. Risk factors, including tobacco use, harmful alcohol consumption, unhealthy diets, and physical inactivity—continue to rise, particularly among youth, who are key to long-term change.

IFMSA urges WHO and Member States to:

Strengthen people-centered prevention strategies, addressing behavioral and metabolic risk factors through a Health-in-All-Policies approach.

Ensure equitable access to essential medicines, diagnostics, and follow-up care within robust primary health care systems, especially for vulnerable groups.

Reform medical education to embed NCD prevention, lifestyle medicine, and intersectoral approaches, preparing future health professionals to address both clinical and social determinants.

Promote meaningful youth engagement in policy-making, health promotion, and community-led initiatives.

Develop robust, disaggregated surveillance systems to track progress and guide evidence-based interventions.

SEAHEARTS is more than a technical package. It is an opportunity to advance universal health coverage, equity, and intergenerational health. With strong political will, multisectoral collaboration, and active youth participation, the Region can lead the way in reducing preventable morbidity and mortality from CVDs.