

International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)

Agenda 9.3- Measles and rubella elimination with interruption of transmission of indigenous measles and rubella virus by 2026

IFMSA commends the WHO and Member States for their commitment to eliminating measles and rubella and achieving interruption of indigenous virus transmission by 2026. Immunization against these diseases remains one of the most cost-effective public health interventions. Yet gaps in coverage, vaccine hesitancy, and inequities in access continue to threaten progress in the South-East Asia Region.

Despite major achievements, millions of children remain un- or under-vaccinated, especially in hard-to-reach, migrant, and marginalized communities. In 2023, regional measles coverage was about 90% for the first dose and 85% for the second—better than global averages, but still below the threshold required to halt transmission. Outbreaks persist, while COVID-19 disruptions risk reversing hard-won gains.

In alignment with IFMSA's Vaccination Policy, we urge WHO and Member States to:

Strengthen routine immunization and catch-up campaigns, leaving no one behind, especially vulnerable, migrant, and refugee populations.

Enhance surveillance and rapid outbreak response mechanisms.

Address vaccine hesitancy through community engagement, youth-led advocacy, and culturally tailored communication.

Facilitate regional vaccine production by supporting intellectual property sharing and voluntary licensing.

Invest in health workforce training, including medical students, to support vaccination outreach, logistics, and communication.

Ensure vaccination is integrated into medical curricula, preparing future health professionals as advocates for immunization.

Elimination by 2026 is achievable, but only with renewed commitment, trust-building, and equity-focused action. By engaging youth and empowering communities, Member States can ensure a healthier, safer future for all children in the South-East Asia Region.