

International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)

Agenda 9.7- Delhi Declaration on emergency preparedness in the South-East Asia Region

IFMSA welcomes the adoption of the Delhi Declaration as a landmark commitment to strengthen emergency preparedness in the South-East Asia Region. The Region is highly vulnerable to health emergencies: between 2000–2022, over 1,200 natural disasters affected more than 400 million people, and infectious disease outbreaks, including dengue, chikungunya, and COVID-19, have caused millions of cases and tens of thousands of deaths.

Despite progress, gaps remain in surveillance, workforce readiness, and community engagement. For example, WHO estimates that over 50% of the Region's health facilities lack functional emergency preparedness plans, and less than 30% of countries conduct regular multi-sectoral simulation exercises. Vulnerable populations - including children, older adults, and marginalized groups, are disproportionately affected during crises.

We, the IFMSA, representing 1.5 million medical students worldwide - urge WHO and Member States to:

Fully operationalize the Delhi Declaration with measurable actions, clear timelines, and accountability mechanisms.

Invest in workforce training, infrastructure, and rapid response capacity, addressing the WHO recommendation of one trained emergency responder per 10,000 population.

Enhance community and youth engagement in preparedness, risk communication, and response planning.

Ensure preparedness plans are inclusive, gender-responsive, and prioritize vulnerable groups.

Promote regional collaboration, knowledge sharing, and multi-country simulation exercises.

Monitor progress with disaggregated data to track equity, transparency, and continuous improvement.

The Delhi Declaration is both an opportunity and an obligation: by investing in preparedness and empowering youth as partners, Member States can save lives, strengthen resilience, and ensure the Region is ready for future emergencies.