

WRITTEN STATEMENT

International Federation of Medical Students' Associations

9.2 Ending preventable maternal, newborn and child mortality in the South-East Asia Region in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Global Strategy on women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (SEA/RC69/R3);

Honorable Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) strongly believes that maternal and newborn health is a crucial pillar of health and well-being agenda and therefore progress in advancing it is paramount in ensuring other aspects of life can flourish. In this, we recognize and highly commend the work of the Southeast Asian region in its efforts, most evident in the decline in the maternal, neonatal and child mortality rates from 2010 onwards. From 2010 to 2023, the maternal mortality ratio declined by more than half (from 197 to 96 per 100000 live births) indicating significant progress towards the global SDG target of 70 per 100 000 livebirths by 2030. The Region has also achieved one of the largest reduction in both newborn and child mortality rates among the WHO regions since 2010.

However, many of the region's most underserved settings still lack funding and facilities to achieve the targets set forth by the SDGs. These are essential to provide proper care, facilitate education for mothers and families to decrease the rate of severe and preventable complications, and reduce inequities in accessing quality maternal and newborn health services.

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

Prioritise funding for maternal and newborn health services (MNHS), ensuring that essential care, including skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric and newborn care, is available and well-equipped, especially in conflict-affected areas and regions with high displacement rates. Strengthen data collection systems better to track maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality rates, providing actionable insights for evidence-based interventions.

Facilitate education and consultation for mothers and families to ensure severe and preventable complications during pregnancy and in newborn period can be promptly dealt with

Engage in continuous professional development to stay updated on evidence-based maternal and newborn health practices, focusing on compassionate, culturally competent care.

The progress achieved has been steady and inspiring but ensuring that the progress is sustained especially in a region such as Southeast Asia where healthcare governance has consistently developed, it is crucial to ensure this development involves and benefits all members of society, no matter their age.