

WRITTEN STATEMENT

International Federation of Medical Students' Associations

9.5 (a) Regional Action Plan and targets for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases (2013–2020) (SEA/RC66/R6) (b) Monitoring progress and the acceleration plan for NCDs, including oral health and integrated eye care, in the South-East Asia Region (SEA/RC75/R2) and (c) Extending and expanding the 'Regional Milestones' of SEAHEARTS: an initiative to reduce CVD burden in the WHO South-East Asia Region (SEA/RC78(7))

Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) remain the leading cause of death in South-East Asia, accounting for an estimated 9.5 million deaths in 2021—53% of which were premature (ages 30–69). The four major NCDs—cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes—cause 22.3% of premature deaths in the region, the highest rate globally. Extending the Regional Action Plan to 2030 is therefore critical.

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) strongly supports the Regional Action Plan and its 10 targets. We commend WHO's technical assistance in surveillance, policy design, and piloting the WHO Package of Essential NCD Interventions (WHO PEN). However, critical gaps remain in tobacco and alcohol control, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and equitable access to quality care.

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

- Continue targeted advocacy and outreach to push NCDs as an issue of global emergency, ensuring that inequities are addressed and prioritised in global and national health policy and development agendas
- Legislate healthy public policies that mitigate the impact of social, environmental and behavioral risk factors on NCD development and complication
- Continue implementing a multisectoral, comprehensive, sustainable and evidence-based strategy to address the rising burden of NCDs in their respective countries
- Address the unequal distribution of NCDs within populations, and the disproportionate burden on groups from lower socioeconomic groups, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations, Indigenous populations, and refugee and migrant populations
- Include youth as partners in discussions regarding NCD prevention and control, leveraging their influence to advocate for change on a national, regional and international level with regards to the global NCD agenda

NCDs prevention and control are paramount to reducing preventable deaths and ensuring premature deaths continue to decrease. We hope that the progress currently seen is sustained to ensure a healthier tomorrow.