

79th Session of the Regional Committee Meeting of the South-East Asia Region (SEA/RC79)

Provisional agenda item 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).

(Document [SEA/RC79/14](#))

The International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (IADR), with support from FDI World Dental Federation (FDI), welcomes the progress report on noncommunicable diseases, including oral health, and commends Member States in the SEA Region for advancing implementation of the regional NCD action plan and acceleration agenda.

Oral diseases are among the most common NCDs and share major risk factors with other chronic conditions. The Region continues to face a significant oral health burden and reports the highest oral cancer incidence and mortality rates among WHO regions^{1,2}. This reinforces the need to position oral health as an integral part of NCD prevention, primary health care, and universal health coverage.

We welcome the Region's oral health targets for 2030, including reducing premature mortality from oral cancer and reducing untreated dental caries. Achieving these targets requires accelerated, integrated action. We call on Member States to:

- Include essential oral health services in primary health care and UHC benefit packages, including prevention, early detection, urgent care, pain relief, and referral pathways.
- Prioritize oral cancer prevention and early detection through stronger action on tobacco, areca nut and betel quid use, alcohol, HPV vaccination where relevant, and timely referral for suspicious oral lesions.
- Strengthen population-level prevention through sugar reduction policies, access to fluoride toothpaste and other evidence-based fluoride interventions, school and community oral health programs, and life-course oral health promotion.
- Embed oral health indicators in NCD surveillance, health information systems, and accountability frameworks to track inequities, guide investment, and evaluate implementation.

- Invest in oral health research, implementation science, workforce capacity, and digital innovation to adapt evidence-based interventions to local contexts.

IADR and FDI stand ready to support WHO and Member States in accelerating progress toward NCD targets, UHC, and better oral and overall health for all.

Thank you.

Count: 293 words, 1811 characters

References

1. Warnakulasuriya S, Filho AM. (2025). Oral Cancer in the South and South-East Asia Region, 2022: Incidence and Mortality. *Oral Dis.* 31(5):1398-1405.
2. World Health Organization. (2023). Global oral health status report: towards universal health coverage for oral health by 2030. Regional summary of the South-East Asia Region. Geneva: World Health Organization.