

AMSA International Report of Seventy-fifth Session of the WHO Regional Committee Meeting for South-East Asia

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Regional Committee Meeting Agenda and its Documents

The Regional Committee raised crucial topics in relation to

healthcare.

Topics which were debated during the Regional Committee Meeting include primary health care (PHC), noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), sustainable financing, health emergency preparedness, tuberculosis, cervical cancer, mental health, progress reports on WHO technical programmes and much more. Click [here](#) to access the meeting agenda and its documents.

AMSA delegation to 75th WHO RC SEARO

Asian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) International attended the 75th WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia with a delegation of 8 youths across different chapters (included as authors of the report).

Preparation prior to the 75th WHO RC SEARO

AMSA International delegates hosted preparatory meetings prior to the 75th WHO RC SEARO. Key duties (such as social media advocacy, report writings to be executed during and after the RCM) were divided up among all delegates. These preparatory meetings were useful in explaining the mechanism of WHO regional committee meetings and the roles

of each AMSA International delegate.

Social Media Presence

Virtual meetings require consistent, contextual, and audience focused social media presence to have thoughtful engagement with relevant stakeholders in the South-East Asia Region (SEAR). Delegation transparency and engagement with AMSA Members are extremely important, this is done through providing daily updates on our core social media platforms as shown below (such as the AMSA International Instagram stories).

Parallel Event

As recommended by previous WHO Regional Committee Meeting evaluations, i.e. the 72nd Session of the WHO RC for WPRO and the 74th Session of the WHO RC for SEARO, a parallel event was organised by the delegates to further bring the WHO closer to medical students.

The delegates organised an online social media campaign entitled RISE UP! (Raising Awareness for Self-Harming and Suicide Prevention) which was held on Instagram from 13–16 October 2022. To kick start the campaign, the volunteers had the opportunity to

be acquainted with fellow global volunteers as they introduced and got to know each other via the WhatsApp group. On the first day of the campaign, the volunteers shared infographics via their Instagram Story to quiz and educate their viewers about the myths or facts regarding self-harming and suicide. Following the first day, the volunteers had the chance to explore and express their thoughts as they are “put” in the shoes of responders and health workers working with people with suicide ideation through “What Would You Do?” case studies. Afterwards, an information ion where and how to offer help when meeting people with self-harming and suicidal tendencies is shared.

This campaign received 183 respondents from more than 29 different nations participating in this campaign effectively; 64.5% of respondents were from Indonesia, followed by more than 10% from Indi., while the remainder were from Bangladesh, China, Egypt, England, Hong Kong, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macau, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, and Nepal, among others. Up to one third of the participants were non-AMSA medical students, while more than half were AMSA members.

Future Recommendations

The Hybrid setting of the 75th WHO RC SEARO limits the delegation in engaging with other relevant stakeholders, WHO Member States. Due to these constraints, no new connections were formed throughout the RCM.

Since the format of the RCM is determined by the WHO Regional Office, our involvement in this RCM largely depends on the circumstances. Several recommendations were concluded during the post-mortem session of the RCM.

(i) Delegate Responsibilities

- The future Delegation Chair has to delegate responsibilities to all delegates and follow up on its execution periodically.
- AMSA Members who assume as a delegate of any WHO RCMs must be assigned with tasks within the delegation, regardless of his/her position within AMSA, and not limited to supervisory roles.
- Follow up meeting during the execution of WHO RCM would be highly encouraged to brief the delegates regarding their work as well to connect between both

offline and online delegates regarding the conference situation

(ii) Proper Delegation Seat Allocation

- Any delegates to WHO RCMs must only allow once per individual AMSA Member to attend one WHO RCM throughout one tenure, this is to increase transparency in seat allocation to WHO meetings.
- A maximum of two (2) AMSA International members are allowed to be involved in any WHO RCMs at one time, where one must assume as the Delegation Chair, and the other in providing direct assistance to the Delegation Chair.

(iii) Parallel Events

- To further bring the WHO closer to medical students, delegates to WHO RCMs are tasked to host a parallel or side event relevant to medical students, youths, adolescents, or children during any WHO RCMs.
- The theme set forth for any parallel events hosted during any WHO RCMs must be in accordance with (a) the

current Regional Committee thematic agenda or document(s), (b) the latest WHO General Programme of Work, (c) the main aim of the delegation - which is to bring the WHO closer to medical students and youths, (d) the WHO framework of engagement with Non-State Actors (FENSA), and (e) the WHO Constitution.

- To further increase the credibility and impact of AMSA International and the delegation parallel event, partnership with both IGOs and INGOs would be highly encouraged with fields detailed below
 - Broaden the publicity and promotions through collaborations with IGOs and/or INGOs
 - Collaborate with professionals affiliated with WHO and other IGOs/INGOs

(iv) Data Spotlight

- We recommend the future delegation to WHO RCMs to be on the lookout for keywords involving the younger generation mentioned during each day of the RCM (such as children, schoolchildren, students,

adolescents, and youths). This can be termed as “Spot Youth”. A daily pie-chart and a graphical representation over time for the entire RCM detailing the amount of times the term(s) being mentioned may be generated for this matter and distributed through social media handles.

- Involvement of women in our society is crucial to break the perceived glass ceiling in the younger generation. “Spot Woman” aims for a balanced gender distribution in our workforce through increasing the representation of women. This is done through screening oratory and written (whenever possible) statements delivered by any representative of Member States, the WHO Regional Committee, Inter-Governmental Organisations, Non-State Actors, Private Entities, Non-Governmental Organisations, Philanthropic Entities, and Educational Institutions. Similarly, a daily pie-chart and a graphical representation over time for the entire RCM detailing the differences in representation may be generated for this

purpose and distributed through social media platforms.

Reflections from the 75th WHO RC SEARO

The 75th WHO RC SEARO is an exceedingly insightful 5-day event (5 to 9 September 2022) for AMSA International delegates, especially because it is the first opportunity for AMSA International to send an onsite delegate to witness the event firsthand. Onsite or online, the agendas of health issues being discussed as national-level advances were reported reminded us of a duality: **we have made a lot of progress, but a lot of work still has to be done.** Mental health accessibility through primary health care (PHC) strengthening is particularly of interest as it was held in the Ministerial Roundtable. Whether it is mental health, cervical cancer, PHC, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), sustainable financing, health emergency preparedness, or tuberculosis (TB), states can learn from each other through **effective and evidence-based best practices in neighboring countries.**

More compelling than the statements from health ministers and/or their proxies are the

comments from **non-state actors (NSAs)**, such as the Global Health Taskforce and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). While state actors' comments tend to be similar, reiterating numbers, prevalences, and renowned recommendations, the impartiality of non-state actors and their experience in working on these health issues directly allowed meaningful insights to be heard on the floor. For instance, as countries share hopeful numbers of tuberculosis cases, MSF highlighted the need for shorter yet less toxic treatments for TB and the alarmingly worse forecasts in the following years. It is a shame that some NSAs' speaking durations were cut due to time constraints. In various plenaries, NSAs reminded us that **vulnerable populations** are a priority; that despite grassroots efforts, **health policy improvements are still needed for better outcomes**; that **holistic quality services** are what we aim for.

Smiling was irresistible as the Flagship Song was played during short breaks between plenaries. In this song, **children** sang and danced along to lyrics about the **eight flagship priority programs of SEARO.** They represent a stronger presence of youths in advocacy of health issues, including but not limited to the international

stage. Perhaps they are invited to remind health leaders that younger generations are at stake. As this is reflected upon us, as medical students, we become more aware that health issues are of significance, as they will be part of our future. This delegation believes that **our involvement, as youths, cannot be more crucial or timely.**

Report Conclusion:

Throughout this RCM, engagement was limited due to the hybrid setting set forth by the organiser of the RCM this year, we hope that future delegates are able to join the delegation in-person at WHO RCMs for a better experience.

This report may be used for future delegates to prepare themselves for upcoming WHO Regional Committee Meetings (both virtually and physically), particularly to improve data utilisation, advocacy (via social media or in-person interaction), organising parallel events, engagement with relevant stakeholders, and most importantly aligning AMSA International's work with the work of the WHO. We hope that this report provided you some insight into the works of AMSA in WHO Regional Committee Meetings. Thank you very much!

Viva AMSA!

Disclosures:

Ms. Charlotte Lintang Kinasih, Mr. Pratyush Kumar and Mr. Gunteshwar Singh were the leads of the project. Ms. Charlotte Lintang Kinasih the Liaison Officer to Governmental Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations 2022/2023, Mr. Pratyush Kumar was the Chief Editor of JAMSA 2022/2023 and Mr. Gunteshwar Singh was the Delegation Chair and General Secretary of AMSA Intl 2022/2023.

All other authors were AMSA Intl Delegates and had equal contribution and have been positioned alphabetically.

Figures:



Figure 1: Live Reports on Delegates' Instagram were reposted on AMSA International's Instagram account and put on a dedicated highlight for the 75th WHO RC SEARO.



Figure 2: Event Recaps were posted on Instagram Story within three consecutive days two weeks after the WHO RC meeting ended (25 September–27 September 2022)