

**Statement of the
International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA)**

Session: Agenda Item 3. e: Regional strategy for fostering digital health in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (2023–2027).

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69th Session of WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean
- Cairo, Egypt/Hybrid

Honorable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations recognizes the role of digital health in achieving better protection in health emergencies and achieving Universal Health Coverage. However, the rapid digitization of healthcare may widen health disparities if solutions are not developed to concerns such as data security, fragmentation of national digital health governance, and lack of expertise.

As a student organization, we emphasize the education of healthcare professionals as essential for the digital transformation of health. The IFMSA Digital Health survey conducted in 2021 reported that more than 52% of respondents from 111 countries worldwide (including our region) did not receive digital health education in their curricula. While having this gap, there is also clear evidence of our interest in digital health education. This highlights the need to include it as a compulsory part of the medical curriculum in this modern era.

Therefore, we call on the Member States to:

- Follow the WHO's recommendations in the regional strategy for fostering digital health in the region and ensure the accessibility and equitable distribution of services within the national contexts.
- Support the development of evidence-based digital health initiatives through investment in resources and infrastructure;
- Collaborate with the other Member States to establish a framework for health data governance that can act as a guide for national legislation for data use, security, and protection.
- Support universities to include digital health skills and literacy in medical curricula.
- And recognize youth as key stakeholders in spreading the culture of digital health within national health systems and easing its utilization among our populations.

Thank you,

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