

**Statement by Dr. Bikash Devkota, Nepal on Behalf of the SEAR Member States
At the 158th Meeting of the WHO-Executive Board
on Agenda Item 2: Report by the Director-General
2 February 2026**

**Mr. Chair,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,**

My delegation has the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States from the WHO South-East Asia Region.

As the Director General articulated, we meet at a moment when the global health architecture is under stress and multilateralism itself is being tested.

The past year has been one of the most challenging in WHO's history. Funding constraints, widening financing gaps, and difficult prioritization choices have reshaped how we work. Yet this moment has also reaffirmed a fundamental truth: no country can meet today's health challenges alone.

Against this backdrop, the South-East Asia Region reaffirms its commitment to resilient health systems as the most effective pathway for achieving the ambitions that the organization has set for.

Progress is evident, but uneven and insufficient. While gains have been made in selected areas, current trajectories remain insufficient to meet several SDG targets by 2030. Persistent gaps in essential health services, financial protection, preparedness, and population health outcomes continue to challenge our systems.

Health inequities in countries remain a defining issue. Addressing these inequities is central to achieving sustainable progress and to leaving no one behind.

Mr. Chair,

Our region faces a complex, dual epidemiological burden. On the one hand, there is rapidly increasing cases of NCDs like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer while on the other hand, we are still fighting infectious diseases, malnutrition, and maternal-child health issues. The region experiences high NCD prevalence exceeding global averages, driven by aging, climate change vulnerabilities, and high cardiovascular risk factors.

Yet countries in the region are demonstrating that progress is possible. PHC-based integrated models of care are expanding. Rapid molecular diagnostics, AI-enabled diagnostics, mobile screening, are improving outcomes. NCDs and mental health are increasingly integrated into primary care, supported by digital tools, telemedicine, and community-based approaches. The region is leading tobacco control measures despite industry pushbacks.

In an evolving and constrained global financing environment, the Region strongly supports efforts to strengthen sustainable and predictable financing for WHO.

At the same time, prioritization exercises must consider population size, epidemiological burden, and country needs. Doing so will maximize impact, promote equity, and strengthen confidence in the multilateral system especially among high-burden regions.

Let us reaffirm our commitment to leave no one behind, to protect the vulnerable, and to build stronger, more resilient health systems for generations to come.

Thank you!