



# **YOHRA Participation Report: Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) 2025**

*By YOHRA. 2025 Volume III*

## Background

The founders of the **Youth Organization for Health & Rare Advocacy (YOHRA)** recently participated in the prestigious **Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) 2025**. Organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), this forum gathered global leaders, policymakers, youth advocates, and representatives from the private sector and civil society to accelerate action toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the theme: "**Accelerating Inclusive and Sustainable Development through Innovation, Mobility, and Resilience.**"

Given YOHRA's focus on youth empowerment, innovation, global health advocacy, and sustainable community development, participation in this forum marked a significant milestone in amplifying the organization's voice on an international platform and advocating effectively for youth leadership and rare disease initiatives in the broader context of sustainable development.

## Key Participation and Activities

YOHRA's representatives actively participated in several high-level discussions and side events, including:

- **Innovative Health Solutions and Resilient Health Systems**
- **Youth Empowerment and Digital Innovation**
- **Sustainable Healthcare and Access for Marginalized Groups**
- **Cross-border Partnerships for Rare Disease Advocacy**

Through these engagements, YOHRA highlighted the essential role of youth-led initiatives in addressing complex health issues, particularly rare diseases, within the broader framework of achieving universal health coverage (UHC) and strengthening global health security.

# **Critical Insights and Contributions**

## **1. Advocating for Rare Disease Visibility**

One of YOHRA's key contributions was the emphasis on increased visibility and attention for rare diseases within the Asia-Pacific health agenda. The founders effectively communicated that rare diseases, though individually uncommon, collectively affect millions globally, disproportionately impacting families and communities economically and socially.

YOHRA underscored the importance of including rare disease care and management into national and regional health strategies, aligning closely with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). The delegation shared real-life examples demonstrating the transformative impact of targeted rare disease advocacy, highlighting successful policy changes driven by youth involvement and digital advocacy platforms.

## **2. Promoting Youth Leadership in Health Advocacy**

Reflecting YOHRA's core mission, the founders strongly advocated for recognizing youth as not only beneficiaries but also leaders in health innovation. They argued effectively that integrating youth voices and leadership into healthcare decision-making processes contributes to more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable solutions.

Through workshops and panels, YOHRA shared insights from successful youth-driven health initiatives across Asia-Pacific, emphasizing youth capacity-building, digital literacy, and leadership training as critical factors in achieving sustainable and equitable healthcare outcomes.

### **3. Leveraging Digital Innovation for Healthcare**

YOHRA presented compelling cases of how digital innovation can significantly enhance rare disease management, patient care, and advocacy. The founders highlighted practical digital solutions developed and employed by youth, such as telehealth platforms, mobile advocacy campaigns, and digital health education tools.

The delegation advocated for increased investment and policy support for youth-led digital health innovations, stressing that empowering young innovators and creating digital infrastructure could drastically improve rare disease diagnostics, treatment accessibility, and public health education.

### **4. Fostering Cross-border Partnerships**

In alignment with APFSD's theme on mobility and resilience, YOHRA engaged in productive dialogues with international partners, emphasizing cross-border cooperation as essential for tackling rare diseases, which require shared knowledge, coordinated research, and harmonized healthcare policies.

YOHRA's founders introduced the concept of regional rare disease collaboration frameworks, calling for harmonized regulatory approaches, data-sharing mechanisms, and multinational research initiatives. This initiative was widely supported, prompting interest from stakeholders, including government representatives, international organizations, and civil society groups.

### **5. Sustainable and Inclusive Health Systems**

YOHRA stressed the importance of building inclusive health systems that explicitly cater to marginalized populations, including rare disease patients who are often overlooked in mainstream healthcare planning. The delegation advocated for integrating rare disease education into medical training, ensuring that healthcare professionals are better equipped to diagnose, treat, and manage rare conditions effectively and compassionately.

## Outcomes and Next Steps

Following active engagement at APFSD 2025, YOHRA commits to:

- Developing a detailed policy brief on integrating rare disease management into national healthcare strategies across the Asia-Pacific region.
- Expanding youth leadership training programs, specifically focusing on digital advocacy and innovation in healthcare.
- Initiating partnerships with regional stakeholders for developing digital health solutions aimed at improving rare disease diagnosis and treatment accessibility.
- Hosting a Youth-Led Rare Disease Advocacy Summit in 2026 to further mobilize youth networks, policymakers, and international partners toward collaborative action.

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## Conclusion

YOHRA's participation in APFSD 2025 significantly elevated awareness around youth-driven rare disease advocacy and reinforced the critical importance of youth empowerment, digital innovation, and cross-border collaboration for sustainable healthcare development. The forum provided valuable insights, fostered strategic partnerships, and reaffirmed YOHRA's role as a key player in shaping an inclusive, innovative, and resilient future for rare disease communities across the Asia-Pacific region.

**YOHRA remains committed to driving youth-led health solutions forward, ensuring that the voices and potential of young people continue to shape a healthier and more equitable world.**