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ACTION PLAN FOR THE TERM 2025/2026

Vision: Sustaining Growth Through Internal Capacity Building

As President of IADS for the term 2025/2026, my overarching vision is to build on the foundation that has already been laid out without reinventing the wheel. My approach will focus internally on sustaining the growth and strengthening the internal capacity of IADS to ensure that the association is prepared for long-term success and well defined external positioning within the international healthcare organizations' network.

The next term should aim to develop the leadership and workforce capacities, aligning with the 3-year strategic plan of IADS which aims to strengthen the association and expand its global reach.

The 3-year strategic plan for IADS is briefly structured as follows:

- **Phase 1: Data Collection and Re-establishment (2024/25 Term)**
Focuses on gathering insights, addressing internal challenges, and building new connections.
- **Phase 2: Capacity Building (2025/26 Term)**
Introduces new activities based on research, strengthens partnerships, and expands capacity building efforts.
- **Phase 3: Implementation and Expansion (2026/27 Term)**
Puts initiatives into action, grows membership, forms international partnerships, and evaluates progress to set the foundation for future development.

This second year of the strategic plan is crucial as it focuses on capacity building, and my goal is to position IADS to fully implement its third-year of Implementation and Expansion where the objective is to put developed projects into action and explore new growth avenues. Every decision made will be based on the association's current capacity, ensuring that we balance ambition with practicality.

STRENGTHS

- **INTERNATIONAL/GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

IADS provides students with unique opportunities to travel, participate in exchanges, and engage in international events. This strength attracts students seeking to expand their horizons and develop global perspectives. We need to sustain this mobility while ensuring that these opportunities are equitably accessible across all regions.

- **DIVERSE RANGE OF PROJECTS**

IADS offers projects that respond to a wide variety of interests, such as public health, scientific research, exchange and voluntary programs. This variety helps attract dental students with different professional goals, enhancing the value of the association. My focus will be on strengthening these programs by streamlining their structure with the executive board and leadership and increasing awareness of our members to actively participate in our program activities .

- **ESTABLISHED HISTORY AND CREDIBILITY**

IADS's long-standing presence since 1951 gives it a solid reputation. The association has built credibility, not only with dental students communities but with international stakeholders, which is an advantage when seeking partnerships, funding, and engagement. This legacy will be leveraged in the upcoming term to enhance external relationships to build on the organization credibility as the sole international representative for dental student's voice worldwide.



WEAKNESSES

- **ACCESSIBILITY OF PROGRAMS**

One of the challenges we face is the high cost of some of our programs, making them less accessible to all students, especially those from low-income regions. Addressing this will be a key focus by exploring subsidies, grant opportunities, and partnerships that can lower the costs for participants through project-focused funding scheme options based on the donor interests.

- **LOW VISIBILITY TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

Although IADS runs several valuable projects, they are often not well-known to third parties, such as sponsors or external organizations. This lack of visibility limits our ability to attract partnerships and sponsorships. We should focus on improving our outreach strategies to better showcase what IADS has to offer and to work closely with the VP of public relations to develop flyers for the IADS multiple projects and scopes.

- **WEAK IT INFRASTRUCTURE**

Our online tools and digital infrastructure need significant improvement to better serve our members and streamline our operations. Investment in digital platforms that enhance communication, event management, and data analysis will be prioritized to modernize IADS's digital footprint.



- **OVER-RELIANCE ON VOLUNTEERS**

The association relies heavily on volunteers, which can lead to burnout and a lack of sustained momentum. To mitigate this, I plan to introduce more formal recognition systems, create pathways for leadership development, and implement incentives to maintain volunteer engagement and satisfaction.

- **LIMITED FUNDING AND INEFFICIENT SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENTS**

While IADS has managed to secure sponsorships, the agreements often don't cover the wide range of activities that need funding. We tend to focus sponsorships on major events such as congresses, while other important initiatives like exchanges and IVPs are left underfunded. My goal is to negotiate more comprehensive and inclusive sponsorship agreements that cover the whole spectrum of IADS workforce activities.

- **LACK OF INCLUSIVITY AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES**

In the past, decision-making within IADS has not consistently reflected the diverse perspectives of regional associations, such as EDSA, AfroDSA, and

APDSA, and their unique priorities. The term will prioritize the creation of a structured framework to actively involve these associations in shaping IADS policies. By aligning regional needs with IADS' global strategies, we will ensure that our efforts are more inclusive and responsive to the specific challenges faced in each region.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS FOR 2025/2026

1. Capacity Building

The core of my term will revolve around **capacity building**—ensuring that IADS grows stronger from within. This effort will target three main areas: leadership, workforce development, and alumni engagement.

- **Leadership Development:**

We will design training and mentorship programs to develop the skills of IADS leaders, with a focus on project management, strategic thinking, communication, and soft skills. This will enable our leadership to be better equipped to handle the diverse and complex challenges of the organization.

- **Workforce Development:**

To enhance the productivity and effectiveness of our workforce, IADS will work closely with the Training Committee and external consultants (where needed) to provide capacity-building workshops that focus on teamwork, leadership, task management, and conflict resolution. This will create a more engaged, resilient, and efficient team that can carry out IADS's mission effectively.

- **Alumni Engagement:**

We will engage our alumni network to provide mentorship and contribute to capacity-building initiatives. Alumni bring invaluable experience and can offer strategic guidance that supports the development of current leaders.

2. Financial Stability

One of the biggest challenges IADS faces is its over-reliance on membership fees and isolated sponsorships for financial stability. To address this, we should take several key actions:

- **Diversify Income Sources:**

We will create and promote more revenue-generating events that engage our students and allow us to collect capitation fees. More activities would attract student participation while raising funds for the organization.

- **Expand Sponsorship Models:**

Building on the strategy introduced by the current President, we will broaden the scope of sponsorships to include more than just major events. Sponsorship agreements will cover operational costs like magazine printing, website maintenance, and essential projects like IVPs (International Volunteer Programs).

Sponsors will also be targeted to support **general operations** of IADS, not just specific events, allowing more flexibility in the association's financial planning.

- **Grants:**

We will explore grant opportunities that align with IADS's goals. These could come from governmental bodies, NGOs, or global health initiatives. Our approach will focus on identifying

grants that directly support our existing programs or enable their development. This is to be done in collaboration with the Vice President of Finances.

3. Strengthening External Partnerships

IADS already has strong relationships with many external organizations, but we must deepen these partnerships and pursue new collaborations in ways that are sustainable and mutually beneficial.

- **World Dental Federation (FDI):**

We will further engage with FDI by involving more IADS officers (especially the Public Health Officer) in the collaboration. FDI offers resources, training, and grants that could be utilized to develop public health initiatives within IADS. We will also leverage FDI's global reach to raise the profile of IADS and dental students on the international stage. Additionally, IADS should make use of the opportunity to attend the World Health Assembly (WHA) through FDI to contribute to global health policy discussions.

- **World Health Organization (WHO):**

As oral health becomes more integrated into public health frameworks, IADS's role on the international stage will be more significant. We will apply for Civil Society status with the WHO, which would allow us to actively participate in global decision-making on oral health. This move is crucial given the recent integration of oral health into Public Health and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) frameworks.

- **IADR (International Association for Dental Research):**

Our relationship with IADR will be focused on expanding research opportunities for dental students. This partnership will further develop the International Dental Research Programs (IDRPs), providing more avenues for students to engage in cutting-edge research and improve their academic portfolios.

- **IFMSA (International Federation of Medical Students' Associations):**

Our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IFMSA is a great foundation, but it needs to be made actionable. IADS will collaborate with IFMSA to implement exchange programs, joint training sessions, and public health initiatives, benefiting from IFMSA's expertise in capacity building.

- **Regional Dental Associations (EDSA, AfroDSA, APDSA):**

It is crucial for IADS to maintain and strengthen relationships with regional dental associations. Collaboration with EDSA, AfroDSA, and APDSA will help ensure that regional priorities are recognized on the international level. IADS will actively engage in joint events, discussions, and exchanges with these associations to support mutual growth and regional development.

4. Expanding Our Global Reach

Collaborations with Global Stakeholders will be enhanced, especially focusing on advocacy and raising the profile of IADS in global health policy discussions.

- The **World Health Students' Alliance (WHSA)** was established as a coalition of global student organizations in health-related fields, with the aim of uniting voices and collaborating on global health advocacy. IADS proudly stands as one of the **founding organizations** of WHSA, alongside other key players like the **International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA)**, the **International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF)**, and others.
- Our involvement from the beginning was crucial in ensuring **oral health** was a core element of the WHSA's agenda. This collective effort brings together students from across disciplines

to engage in **interprofessional collaboration** and joint advocacy efforts, especially during major health policy discussions.

5. Increasing Online Activities and Engaging Pre-Clinical Students

To better engage all members of IADS, we will significantly increase our **online presence and activities**, particularly targeting **pre-clinical students**, who often feel left out of the core activities of the association.

- **Online Training and Workshops:**

We will host more **online workshops** focused on key areas like leadership, and soft skills development. These workshops will be designed to cater specifically to pre-clinical students, offering them a head start in their professional development.

- **Gamified Learning and Engagement for Pre-Clinical Students:**

To attract pre-clinical students and increase their engagement, we can introduce **gamified learning experiences** under the supervision of SCORE that make learning fun and interactive. These activities will include quizzes, interactive webinars, and competitions, making IADS more appealing to younger members.

6. Strengthening Sponsorships and Expanding Offerings to Our Partners

As a student-led organization, IADS has always valued the crucial support of our sponsors, who help enable the success of our activities, events, and initiatives worldwide. However, it is time to **elevate** these collaborations by increasing the **value we offer** to our sponsors while ensuring we maintain the balance between our capacity and the expectations placed upon us.

As we look toward the future, our focus will be on **enhancing the offerings we provide** to these partners, ensuring a **mutually beneficial** relationship that extends beyond conventional sponsorship arrangements.

Expanding Offerings for Sponsors

- **Increased Visibility through Digital Platforms:**

One of the primary ways to enhance our value proposition to sponsors and future partners is by increasing their **visibility** on IADS's digital platforms, particularly our **website**. We plan to offer sponsors **dedicated space** on our website, including:

- **Brand promotion** through banners and featured content on our homepage.
- **Sponsor-dedicated pages** that highlight their commitment to IADS and the global dental student community.
- Access to student surveys or feedback, offering insights into the preferences and expectations of the next generation of dental professionals.

Navigating Sponsorship Expectations as a Student-Led Organization

- **Capacity Management:**

While we value the support of our sponsors, it's crucial to ensure that **sponsorship opportunities do not exceed our operational capacity** as a student-led organization. We aim to establish clear guidelines on the scope of projects and activities IADS can undertake in collaboration with our sponsors to avoid overextension and to maintain a **high-quality** experience for all parties involved.

- **Long-Term Value for Sponsors:**

Rather than focusing on short-term projects that may overwhelm our resources, we will prioritize **long-term, sustainable partnerships** that benefit both IADS and our sponsors. By maintaining a balance between **what we can deliver** and **what sponsors expect**, we will continue to position IADS as a **valuable and credible partner** in the global oral health community.

7. Strengthening Sponsorships and Expanding Offerings to Our Partners

Delegates are the backbone of IADS, a key pillar of our approach to delegate engagement this term will be **enhanced communication** and **collaborative decision-making**. Delegates represent the interests of dental students globally, and we believe they should have an **active voice** in shaping the direction and priorities of IADS. To achieve this, we propose implementing several new initiatives that invite **ongoing dialogue** and **feedback** from our delegates throughout the year.

- **Regular Themed Discussions:** We will introduce a series of delegate-led virtual discussions focused on specific topics that are most relevant to the needs and interests of our members. These discussions will provide a platform for knowledge sharing and idea exchange among delegates.
- **Focus Groups on Key Initiatives:** We will establish focus groups led by delegates to address specific initiatives and strategic goals. By working together, these focus groups will develop **proposals** and **recommendations** that will guide IADS.

The 2025/2026 term will be a year of focusing internally on developing the organization's capacity while ensuring we take advantage of external partnerships, opportunities, and strategic collaborations. By building strong foundations, securing financial stability, and nurturing a skilled and empowered workforce, IADS will be prepared to achieve its ambitious goals and continue to represent dental students globally as a leading organization in the field. Every decision will be carefully aligned with the 3-year strategic plan to ensure long-term success and sustainability.