The WHF had excellent partners for the circulatory health summit in the Asia-Pacific Region, namely the Asia Pacific Society of Cardiology, The Asia Pacific Heart Network, the Singapore Heart Association, the Singapore Cardiac Society and the ASEAN Federation of Cardiology. The Summit brought together scientists, clinicians, behavioural specialists, advocates on NCDs, and global players such as the WHO. In particular those experts involved in heart disease and stroke were prominent.

The “open sessions” were very informative with substantial presentations and discussions on key topics in circulatory health and country plans for the 25x25 target. Topics focusing on access to essential and affordable medicines, WHO Global Hearts Package and WHF Roadmaps, and Healthier cities were prioritized. Provocative discussions on why we are failing to prevent the preventable (Richard Norton of the Lancet) and encouraging the mobilization of CVD health practitioners and researchers to implement health plans that focus on what we know (Salim Yusuf, population Health Research Institute) was held. The keynote presentation by Sania Nishtar provided the highest level of insight into NCDs advocacy at every level: from communities to governments and global leaders in the field.

The take home message to all delegates present is that there is sufficient scientific evidence to confidently implement strategies for CVD prevention and care which needs to be acted upon at country levels. A focus on risk reduction through targeting tobacco use, for example, is seen as a key intervention given that tobacco smoking is a strong predictor of CVD onset. Community-based approaches to detection, treatment and care was also emphasized as a way of empowering individuals affected by circulatory diseases.

The “closed session” (Partners and Continental Council Meeting) on Day 2 of the Summit was a welcome opportunity for members of WHF to address the contributions and limitations of the WHF in the way it serves its functions. The presentation of the survey results by the CEO of WHF indicate that members felt that WHF assisted greatly in driving World Heart Day. These insights help the development of the Strategic Plan for 2018-2020.