



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

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Agenda Item 6.1 Maternal, infant and young child nutrition

Honourable Chair,
Distinguished delegates,

Despite the increasing number of policies tackling obesity, the rates of individuals suffering from obesity worldwide are still rising. Out of a population of 7 billion, more than 1.4 billion adults are classified as overweight and half a billion as obese.

The current challenge around obesity is global, and exists in high, middle and low-income countries. However, this epidemic is more prevalent in low and middle-income populations, which underlines the problem as a social justice issue and reiterates the importance of tackling social determinants of health.

The risk of pregnancy and labour complications increase as a result of a maternal body mass index greater than 30 kg/m². Therefore, we urge the importance of implementing mechanisms to monitor and educate women with a BMI above 30 around the risks associated with obesity during pregnancy.

The increase in prevalence of obesity in adults and pregnant women leads to a higher rate of child obesity. Obese children are likely to grow into obese adults; with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, liver disease; and diminished chances of social and economic performance in adult life. Thus, obesity is prone to pass on in generations and create a vicious cycle.

Most current policies blame individual behavior and lifestyle choices. However, increasing evidence suggests that the focus should instead shift to societal policies and economic systems.

We therefore call for the industry to

- lower sugar content in food and drinks
- to commit to transparent and clear labelling of the dietary composition of products.

We call for Member States to

- introduce fiscal measures in the form of a high sugar tax in all products
- regulate the marketing of high sugar products which specifically target adolescents and children
- create binding legislation to protect and promote public health

Thank you.