



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

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IFMSA delegation at WHO EB138:
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Agenda Item 6.4 Public health dimension of the world drug problem including in the context of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem, to be held in 2016

Honorable chair,
Distinguished delegates,

We, The international Federation of Medical Students Association, appreciate the focus on such a pressing topic, and we recognize the need for action in the field of drugs and their harms to the youth, general population and health systems.

It is clear that no quick and simple cure for addiction exists. However, addiction can be both prevented and treated. IFMSA emphasizes the need and importance of intervention by healthcare professionals before the development of addiction, and urge governments and civil society to raise awareness about the harms of drugs. Furthermore, we call for medical staff investment in evidence-based prevention with the special focus on youth populations.

We must treat drug users like all other patients who suffer from chronic conditions. Furthermore, we highlight the current widespread stigmatization, criminalization and punishments of drug users. Drug users should be supported with appropriate and acceptable treatment as well as recovery services, and their human rights should at all times be respected.

We recognize the rising gravity of opiates, as they remain the most problematic form of drug use globally. That is usually due to the relationship between the use of opiates and injection drug use, and the fact that the use of opiates is the reason for majority of admissions for drug use treatment in Asia and Europe. Health staff should protect drug users from drug associated harms especially blood-borne viral diseases, such as HIV, HBV and HCV, and overdose.

It is clear that the role of drugs in today's life is undeniable. We as the future health workforce call for stronger health systems which provide this vulnerable population with dignified and non-discriminatory health care and support them to reincorporate into society.

Thank you.