



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

Statement of International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) 69th World Health Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland

Agenda item 14.8 2014 Ebola virus disease outbreak

Honorable chair,
Distinguished delegates,

In 2014 the world was struck with the latest Ebola outbreak. The Ebola epidemic surprised us all and it became clear that the WHO and the global society did not have the mechanisms to respond efficiently and adequately, resulting in the death of 11,325 people. Learning from these experiences and acknowledging the core role of WHO in emergencies, IFMSA congratulates the creation of the WHO program for health emergency management creating a unified effort.

IFMSA would like to emphasize that efforts in ongoing emergencies should always support and protect existing health systems, rather than replacing them. Despite the strength of WHO, we call for caution to respect local systems and ensure that short term interventions do not have long term negative effects. We urge the WHO to remember that continuous strengthening of vulnerable health systems is the long term sustainable solution to health emergency responses and that follow-up and support to establish resilient health systems are essential to ensure full recovery and preparedness for a new emergency.

We applaud the acknowledgment of the importance of the Non-Governmental Sector within the new program especially regarding empowerment and inclusion of communities. We urge for an even stronger inclusion for communities in emergency responses as these are both part of the reason and the solution of such outbreaks. This belief is something continuously carried through different IFMSA projects, mainly the "Kick Ebola Out" campaign, aimed at raising health literacy of Ebola affected populations in Sierra Leone and work with the communities to fight the Ebola virus.

Finally, we underline that this program represents a promising long term solution for any future outbreaks, and works to ensure that we truly can achieve health for all.

Thank you.