Statement of the
International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations (IFMSA)
71st World Health Assembly

Agenda Item 11.4 Health, environment and climate change

Honourable chair,
Distinguished delegates,

While the impact of climate change on health is vast and growing, it is due time for us to act ambitiously.

The International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations is happy for the progress made on the road map and highly welcomes the report on human health and biodiversity making the interlinkages between the environment and priority health concerns. This is however not enough and we urge member states to take the recommendations made to further climate action that will benefit health. As outlined, many measures have the possibility to improve health and ecosystems while combating climate change.

We strongly agree that a wider societal, intersectoral and population-based public health approach is needed and support interlinking the work of the WHO with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and processes under the UNFCCC. We call on all stakeholders to follow this approach as the health sector has specific responsibilities to inform policy-makers and the public on the health impacts of climate and environmental change.

With the start of the first review of the Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement we call on members states to make use of this momentum to take the integral approach and make the health sector and public health measures an integral part of climate action. And while we prepare for the United Nations High-Level Meeting on noncommunicable diseases, we want to underline the fact that air pollution is among the same magnitude as the 4 main recognised risk factors, yet largely overlooked.

As IFMSA we walk the talk and recently released recommendations to make our own meetings environmentally friendly, with our youth preWHA as first example, as we believe we all have the responsibility to turn climate change into the greatest opportunity for public health of this century.

Thank you,