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

Agenda Item 11.7 Preparation for the third High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, to be held in 2018

Honourable chair,
Distinguished delegates,

Noncommunicable diseases represent the largest proportion of the global burden of disease, accounting for 70% of deaths globally. In addition premature mortality from NCDs constitutes one of the major challenges for development. These deaths are however largely preventable.

We know what to do and yet we are nowhere near the path of reaching goal 3.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. We need to take the opportunity of the third High level meeting on the prevention and control of NCDs to establish this straight and clear.

We firstly strongly urge all stakeholders to look beyond the scope of 30 to 70 years old and recognise the need for a life-course approach. While being seen as the ‘healthy population’ young people also suffer from NCDs but are overlooked in data collected and furthermore form a tremendous window of opportunity for prevention, as 70% of risk factors leading to mortality from NCDs later in life are started during adolescence.

Secondly, we call on all stakeholders to give greater attention to Mental Health as the leading cause of disability worldwide, while still largely affected by stigma. Thirdly, the importance of a multi sectoral approach and breaking down silos for effective implementation of public health measures for NCDs must be recognized. While doing that we need to not shy away from addressing the elephant in the room, industry interference.

Last, we need to ensure high-level political commitment to prioritise matching the financing for NCD prevention and control with the burden these diseases pose and successful implementation of measures to battle NCDs beyond the high-level meeting.

We, as medical students and future healthcare providers, urge the need of urgent actions in preventing, controlling and managing NCDs, and we are committed to play an active role it.

Thank you.