



# IFMSA

International Federation of  
Medical Students' Associations

## Statement of International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) 68th WHO RC for Europe, Rome, Italy 17-20 September 2018

### Advancing public health in the WHO European Region for sustainable development

The IFMSA is a youth organisation representing 1.3 million medical students worldwide, made of passionate change-makers, who will be prominent health leaders in 2030. As such, we are strongly committed to promoting public health as a key to obtain sustainable development.

We believe public health should be addressed through a holistic, people-centred and life-long approach stretching far beyond the health sector alone. To tackle major challenges such as non-communicable diseases and mental health, a shift in our approach to public health is necessary.

Firstly, we emphasize the urgent necessity to undertake a transformation of our health systems. A preventive health model that addresses upstream determinants of health is needed. In order to achieve this, we urge the member states of the WHO European Region to rely on sustainable and prevention-oriented primary healthcare. Furthermore, we want to emphasize, that the most effective and cost-efficient policies are often the ones targeting vulnerable groups (e.g. the youth) and urge member states to take bold steps to ensure the reduction of frequent risk factors as early as possible.

Secondly, we reaffirm the need for a health in all policy approach that recognizes that the determinants to health rely on many interlinked sectors. We note with concern the reinforced influence of commercial or financial interests in Public Health. A holistic approach of every population group remains impossible if an intersectoral approach is not adopted. Thus, we strongly support the second point of the action plan, encouraging member states to adopt coherent strategies across all sectors.

Thirdly, climate change and planetary health is an example of highly interlinked topic with a major impact on public health, considered both as the biggest threat and opportunity for public health in the 21st century. It is of utmost importance that we take joined responsibility to make sure that we build resilient healthcare systems and that the health workforce is sufficiently prepared to face this new challenge.

Lastly, the education of the future and current health workforce should thrive to create a generation of aware, fit-for-purpose and skilful changemakers whom society can rely on to further advance public health. This is why we strongly recommend the youth of every country to become involved in every step of the way: nothing about us without us. Regarding the draft resolution submitted for this meeting (point (j)), we encourage you to undertake continuous efforts to allow and strengthen youth expression on these topics, as youth are both a target group and a major stakeholder for the future of public health.

medical  
**students**  
worldwide