



# IFMSA

International Federation of  
Medical Students' Associations

**World Health Organisation**  
**69th Session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific Region**  
**October 8th - October 12th, 2018 | Manila, Philippines**

## **International Federation of Medical Students' Associations on Agenda Item 16.4: Communicable Diseases**

Honorable Chair,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Communicable diseases remain a significant health priority both globally and on the level of individual countries, mostly with low and middle-income countries.

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) would especially recognise the need to strengthen preparedness for control of Emerging Infectious Diseases and response to public health disasters as a means to reducing the occurrence of disease outbreaks and further catastrophe in case of an outbreak.

The IFMSA regrets the thousands of deaths and immeasurable suffering caused by Emerging Infectious Diseases outbreaks, the risk of which remains a major public health concern and will have many long-term impacts on the societies and economies of the affected countries. Furthermore, the IFMSA believes strong action is required to improve preparedness and respond better to future outbreaks. The IFMSA therefore calls for a coordinated public health emergency response with relation to strengthening and setting clear guidelines on the mechanisms of detection, control and prevention of Emerging Infectious Diseases involving all relevant parties including the World Health Organization, NGOs and national governments.

We also recognize the great importance of vaccines and immunization programs. Vaccine and immunization programs have led to enormous decrease in morbidity and mortality rates from communicable diseases in the past, and are still highly relevant, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). Vaccination has been proven to be one of the most efficient public health measures, preventing an estimated 2.5 million deaths each year.

Comparing the high-income countries on the one end and LMIC on the other, their problems are immensely different. Whilst LMIC still face the issue of inequitable access to vaccines, anti-vaccination movements are rising in high-income countries (HIC) in spite of undeniable success of vaccination programmes. To avert the above mentioned problems there is a need to join efforts for education and facilitation of public discussions, which will inform people about importance of immunization following the WHO recommendations for Routine Immunisation. This will not only stimulate better understanding of the necessity and importance of investing and improving vaccination programmes, but will also raise awareness about the harm and lack of evidence for the anti-vaccine movement.

Vaccination does not only provide an individual protection but has a rather higher impact on the health of the population, including those not eligible for it. As medical students, we have the responsibility to raise awareness about the benefits of vaccination among all stakeholders, including governments, medical and professional societies and the public, while stressing the severe repercussions resulting from low vaccination coverage.

Thank you.

medical  
**students**  
worldwide

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