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**General Debate 3 (a): Actions for the further implementation
of the Programme of Action of the International Conference
on Population and Development at the global, regional and
national levels**

**3 (b): Population, food security, nutrition and
sustainable development**

**Statement submitted by International Federation of Medical
Students' Associations (IFMSA), a non-governmental organization
in special consultative status with the Economic and
Social Council²**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

¹ E/CN.9/2020/1.

² The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations welcomes and affirms the priority theme of "Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development".

Background

For years now, the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) has been advocating for Health, Environment and Climate Change, voicing the opinion of 1.3 million medical students from 126 countries worldwide. We believe that as global youth, we have the unique capacity to empower our communities locally, nationally, and globally.

IFMSA recognizes climate change as the biggest global health emergency of our century that demands action of utmost urgency. As medical students, we are concerned about the future and health of our generation that will be impacted by the current lack of sufficient climate action in life-threatening ways. IFMSA also recognises that by addressing sustainable agriculture and building climate resilient food systems, we will impactfully protect and promote health for all.

We, as future health professionals, assert the importance of driving local, national and global shifts in our food system, in the interests of improving future global health outcomes. We strongly stress on the co-benefits of addressing our food system for both human and planetary health; recognising that a transition to nutritious and sustainable food systems will have a direct impact on health through increased food security, provision of adequate nutrition and cessation of hunger.

Moreover, we noticed a gap between the impact that food security, environment and climate change have on health and the inclusion of these topics into medical curricula. This gap is leaving future healthcare professionals with insufficient knowledge and skills to address the issue. To change this, we adopted the IFMSA Vision of Climate Change in Medical Curriculum, that calls to have elements of climate-health included in the curriculum of every medical school. We already launched a survey via our communication channels in July 2019. 30.5 per cent reported that at least one of their medical schools have climate change elements in the curriculum. Upon collective review of the number of all their medical faculties, only 15.9 per cent of their faculties had climate health integrated in the curricula.

Call to Action

We call on all relevant stakeholders to:

- Establish a new convention or agreement regarding healthy and sustainable food systems, drawing on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) or Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) as examples;
- Integrate food sustainability as a key factor in government dietary guidelines and food provision;
- Develop public policy, financial incentives, and incorporate food production, loss and waste into national waste programs to target other aspects of the supply chain;
- Invest in farmers in developing countries for post-harvest infrastructure, processing and packaging processes in line with the Save Food Initiative;

- Implement taxes, subsidies and other forms of regulation on food and beverages, inclusive of sugar sweetened beverages and targeted meat taxes;
- Protect consumers, especially children, from inappropriate marketing and publicity of food; limiting advertisements that promote unhealthy diets, processed foods and sugar; and promote healthy dietary practices;
- Consider policies including but not limited to: banning or limiting the availability of unhealthy products in government-run institutions, such as public hospitals and schools;
- Incorporate health impacts of climate change, including malnutrition and food insecurity, into the medical curriculum, promoting a holistic approach to their prevention and control and to the importance of a healthy lifestyle and life-course approach;
- Ensure comprehensive consultation and collaboration across sectors, including civil society organizations;
- Recognize the importance of meaningful youth participation in processes related to food security, nutrition and sustainable development, recognizing that young people will be living in a world informed by decisions made today.

Conclusion

Finally, we as medical students and future health workforce strongly call on the inevitable need for multidisciplinary collaboration and immediate global action that addresses health and the environment for sustainable development, in addition to recognizing youth as stakeholders in the global health strategy.
