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Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in the WHO European Region (resolution EUR/RC66/R11)

Honorable chair, distinguished delegates,

It is a great honour to speak on behalf of the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF), representing over 350,000 pharmaceutical students and recent graduates in 90 countries worldwide.

We congratulate the WHO European Regional Office on the progress made in implementing the Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in the WHO European Region 2016–2025 and for actively supporting Member States in developing NCD policies and action plans. We would also like to congratulate member states for the number of policy interventions we have witnessed during these years, namely the fiscal and marketing policies for tobacco, alcohol and food. Nonetheless, much more progress is needed in regards to "sin taxes" to comprehensively address behavioural NCD risk factors across the region.

With an increasing aging population and a growing number of NCDs cases diagnosed each year, it is in the economic and social interest of member states to pursue policies that help reduce the current and future burden of NCDs in society. This translates into strengthening the capacity of health systems and ensuring their sustainability, while addressing individual needs. Considering the health expenditures related to NCDs, efforts made in disease prevention, early diagnosis and effective treatment put us one step closer to addressing health inefficiencies, promoting the sustainability of our health systems.

The networks of community pharmacies in the European region are the biggest frontlines of national health systems. Pharmacists are one of the most trusted and accessible healthcare providers. With a strong presence at the community-level, pharmacists contribute to reducing inequities in access and quality healthcare (e.g. reduce the distance to closest primary health care institution,) as well as lessening the pressure on primary and emergency healthcare services across the European region.

IPSF calls for integrated NCDs plans and policies that include community pharmacies as key players in national health systems for better NCDs outcomes. From individual patient screening to behaviour change, improved therapeutic adherence, community education, public health interventions and awareness campaigns, community pharmacies and pharmacists could undoubtedly respond to many of the biggest health challenges to alleviate the burden of NCDs and contribute to the wellbeing of our communities and the sustainability of our health systems.

Thank you for your attention.

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