



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

IFMSA Statement on: Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on Health 2020, the European policy for health and well-being 67th WHO Regional Committee for Europe, Budapest, Hungary

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations welcomes the adoption of the roadmap to implement the 2030 agenda and the renewed commitment towards a joint monitoring framework for the SDGs.

We consider raising awareness about the SDGs and their implementation as crucial and laudable, but must also stress that in 2017, much more needs to be done at a local, national and international level.

We agree fully that without health, the SDGs cannot be achieved, and welcome the call for further investment in health. Yet as the future of the healthcare workforce we note current financial trends with concern.

To give one example, although NCDs account for almost 70% of global deaths, financial support for NCD programs remains disproportionately low. In fact, the WHO NCD budget alone is lacking almost a third of its funds. Insufficient investment in health will ultimately pose a strain on our patients, and even today, only 13 out of 53 member states have out-of-pocket payments below the 15% threshold known to cause financial hardship.

These numbers show how vitally we need to promote the investment case for health. Too often is health viewed as a financial burden, whereas in reality investing in health can lead to a fourfold return. Naturally, children in good health do better at school and adults in good health are more productive. Good health contributes to labour supply and a strong health system provides jobs and increases demand from other parts of the economy.

We must also recognise and better harness methods that increase both our financial capacity and health outcomes. Price and tax measures on tobacco, alcohol and sugar sweetened beverages can effectively reduce consumption and the health-care costs of tomorrow, yet remain largely underutilized.

On this crucial issue of finances, it is important that we learn from and keep each other accountable. This is why we support the request for the Regional Director to report to the Regional Committee on the implementation of this resolution every two years. The European region and the world need financial sustainability and integrity in the health sector in order to achieve the SDGs. The time to act on this is now.