



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

IFMSA Statement on: Strengthening Member State collaboration on improving access to medicines in the WHO European Region

67th WHO Regional Committee for Europe, Budapest, Hungary

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations warmly welcomes the working document on strengthening member states collaboration on improving access to medicines in the WHO European Region.

We applaud the WHO Regional office for Europe for emphasising solidarity and equity shared among member states. These values are crucial in order to reach collective solutions that tackle access to medicines as a key element to reduce health inequalities and promote wellbeing for all - pursuits comprehended as priorities in the Tallinn Charter, the Minsk Declaration, Health 2020 and the 2030 Agenda.

We strongly support the WHO global initiative on the fair pricing of medicines and the development of sub-regional purchasing power-related networks that may enhance collaboration on medicines procurement. Even though we highly value WHO's willingness to empower member states on joint price negotiations, informed buying and central contracting it is our concern that this would not be sufficient. Thus, we encourage the WHO Regional Committee and the member states to promote TRIPS flexibilities, including the use of compulsory licenses, and to reject TRIPS plus provision and free trade agreements that lead to the strengthening of global patent monopolies and restricted generic production.

We recognize the efforts on increasing collaboration and information-sharing among member states oriented to the achievement of better policies, regulations and decision-making processes. However, we still face a worrying lack of transparency derived from the current R&D system that leads to duplication and high costs in accessing data related to the drug development process, hindering transparent medicines-pricing negotiations. Hence, we call on governments to implement open access policies in all publicly financed institutions, to publish the price of medicines that they negotiate on behalf of patients, and to speak out for the disclosure of private industry R&D costs.

Finally, we would like to encourage member states to work on a binding agreement on R&D aiming at supporting a coherent, sustainable and patient-centred agenda that guarantees affordable medicines for all. This is not a luxury, but one the pillars to ensure the human right to health.