Honorable Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,

The International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations (IFMSA) commends the efforts by the WHO and the Member States in addressing the burden of Non-Communicable Diseases in the South East Asian Region. We appreciate the political will and commitment to accelerate the progress done in implementing relevant strategies and action plans.

NCDs accounted for almost two-thirds of all deaths in the WHO South-East Asia Region. In 2021, nearly half of these deaths occurred prematurely between the ages of 30 and 69 years. The impact on individuals belonging to this economically productive group implies that NCDs pose a significant threat not only to the health of the population but also to the economic, social, and sustainable development of our region.

The NCDs issues unique to our region could reach a potential solution employing the role of the youth who not only bear the burden but also contribute the most in addressing NCDs. We, the IFMSA, the collective voice of 1.3 million medical students worldwide believe in the utmost importance of placing the youth as a key stakeholder at the center of NCDs global action and decision making. Hence, we call on the WHO and Member States to promote the inclusion and engagement of youth in the pending NCD implementation Roadmap 2022-2030. We further call on Member States to advocate for youth involvement and empowerment in addressing risk factors for NCDs such as tobacco consumption and lifestyle habits. IFMSA also calls on the WHO to foster collaborations between governmental and non-governmental organizations to address the risk factors for NCDs including tobacco consumption holistically through multidisciplinary action. Lastly, we also call the governments to implement a Health in All Policies approach when managing the different NCDs strategies, and implement policies that support the provision of equitable access to basic human rights to the entire population based on the social determinants of health and non-communicable diseases.

Thank you for your attention.

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