

**Statement of the
International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA)**

Session: Agenda Item 2.F: Regional strategy to improve access to medicines and vaccines in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2020–2030, including lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic

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Honourable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and commend the work done by the WHO, member states, and all involved parties in upscaling efforts to ensure improved access to medicines and vaccines in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Globally, almost 2 billion individuals still struggle with access to essential medicines and vaccines. With the onset of COVID-19, the discrepancies in disease prevalence as well as the availability, affordability, and quality of care have been further exacerbated and continued to manifest in inequitable access among other issues. On a regional level, progress has been made in some countries with regard to improving access through multiple interventions. However, over half of the countries within the region are still experiencing issues of access along with inadequate surveillance mechanisms in place that fail to provide data on progress.

On a regional level, access to medicine and vaccines continues to be challenged by issues such as insufficient funding, lack of human resources, inadequate coordination and planning, lack of technical support, and conflict within the region among others.

As such, We as IFMSA Call on the member state to :

1. Strengthen the work on the implementation of national immunization programs towards accessibility and availability of vaccination and medicines for the populations in need.
2. Invest in, strategize and prioritize strengthening healthcare systems infrastructures and preparedness mechanisms in order to assure resilient systems that are able to continue the provision of essential medicines and vaccines during health threats, taking the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and response as a map for building back their systems.

3. Ensure investment in Research and Development strategies that aim to provide plausible solutions for addressing the gaps and challenges within healthcare systems that hinder the progress towards ensuring equitable access to medicines and vaccines.
4. Take the lead in initiating collaborative efforts and multistakeholder engagement and providing spaces for developing policy reforms and guidelines addressing medicine and vaccine-related issues.
5. Engage the general population and develop community participation strategies, particularly youth in developing awareness and mass education strategies for addressing vaccine hesitancy and rational use of medicine.
6. Implement vaccine production and price data transparency policies to establish a stricter control on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) regulations compliance, allowing countries to conduct reasonably priced limitations.

Thank you,

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