



Written Statement of Major Group of Children and Youth for Health and Population Dynamics (19th June 2013)

The IFMSA delegation to the 4th open working group on sustainable development goals co-wrote a statement on behalf of youth and medical students around the world, which you can read below:

I am a young medical student and am speaking here today on behalf of the United Nations Major Group of Children and Youth, and as a proud member of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations, which represents 1.3 million future physicians in over 100 countries.

I would like to address today a few comments, remarks and suggestions on the on-going meeting regarding the engagement of youth in the post-2015 process and the sustainable development goals, especially regarding the health discussions.

Where does youth fit in a post 2015 world?

Almost half of the world's population is under the age of 25, which means there are too many of us to ignore. We, the youth, know how to communicate with each other and to make sure that our different voices are equally heard. We are the generation that grew up with social media, we are the generation of instant sharing. **We are the MDGs generation, but the SDGs will help us give the future we want to the generations to come.** We need clear mechanisms to participate in and contribute to sustainable development. A vibrant and politically engaged youth is necessary because after all, it is our generation that will ensure that the SDGs are achieved.

What do we, the youth, wish to see in the post-2015 world, how can we contribute?

This is a good question, and I hope to talk through some answers. We call for equal access to high-quality education that will equip us to be a part of a sustainable society. We call for decent green jobs that will give us the capacity to create our own opportunities. We call for universal social protection to support the most vulnerable amongst us, while empowering us to drive change. We call for inclusion of sexual health education in all primary school curricula. We call for education and empowerment of women and girls so they may in turn continue to strengthen their families and society.

We must stop thinking of health as medical interventions alone. The **Health in all Policies** approach emphasizes that all policy domains impact and are impacted by health. **Good health is both an outcome and a determinant of successful development policy.** We commend many countries for their statements on health system transformation towards Universal Health Coverage and non communicable diseases. We call for health-sensitive indicators throughout the sustainable development framework. Funding, accountability and governance for health will all follow from strong indicators and targets. The post-2015 development framework must address inequality within and between countries. We need better data to meet the needs of marginalized and vulnerable children and youth. These populations must be a priority in the sustainable development goals.

I am a physician in training and by 2015, I will be a graduated doctor. I will contribute to the healthcare of the young people we are discussing. **I wish for equitable health access for the people that will become my patients, and for their quality of life to allow them to be productive members of society.** During my medical training I have seen obese nine year-olds with high blood pressure, women my age with young children but no home, and refugees suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. We are the first generation with a lower life expectancy than our parents, mostly because of the burden of noncommunicable diseases, while we also clearly understand that we are likely to see a rise in infectious diseases because of globalization and climate change. We have resources unavailable to many members states, but the problems we face have universal roots in inequity. The solutions, we hope, are also universal.

Health plays a critical role in the sustainable development agenda. We ask each of you to commit to ensuring inclusion of health issues within your country's SDG implementation. Healthy youth are engaged youth, healthy human beings are active citizens. This is why we all need to engage today as a team for the future we want. Youth need your wisdom and expertise; you need our vibrancy, perspective and creativity. This process will be a failure if youth are not fully engaged and health. **Youth voices are critical in the design of goals to promote equity and health in a post-2015 world.** You will find us to be energetic, professional and full of new ideas, but we need your help to access the process.