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**STATEMENT BY DR ERIC TAM
REPRESENTATIVE, INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF MEDICAL
STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS (IFMSA)**

Chairman, Your Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates:

I am Eric Tam from Hong Kong. It is my honour to speak to you as the Liaison Officer to WHO-elect of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA). IFMSA currently has 105 national member organizations in 97 countries and represents over one million medical students worldwide. Our mission is to offer future physicians a comprehensive introduction to global health issues, and to bring better health to every population around the globe.

IFMSA recognizes Tobacco Control as a key public health issue in the Western Pacific Region. We are extremely concerned by the detrimental effects tobacco has brought to our societies. In particular, we believe the increasing number of young smokers poses a serious threat to both health and economic burdens of our societies in the long term. We believe anti-tobacco education among young smokers is one of the important methods to avoid the perpetuation of the tobacco epidemic. As future doctors we strongly feel that it is our duty to be the role models of young people, to advocate against tobacco and to help curb the spread of tobacco.

IFMSA has been actively involved in anti-tobacco activities globally over the past years. We were involved in the formulation of the Code of Practice on Tobacco Control for Health Professional Organizations at the WHO informal meeting of health professionals in 2004. In March 2007, we launched the Tobacco Initiative Project. This international project is the cornerstone of our efforts against tobacco. It primarily functions as an international network to guide and coordinate anti-tobacco projects led by medical students. In the past year, anti-tobacco projects have taken place in over 25 countries around the globe.

Our projects primarily aim to raise public awareness on the harmful effects of tobacco and monitor the progress of anti-tobacco measures taken by governments. For instance, Japanese medical students participated in educating junior high school students on the harmful effects of tobacco. In Hong Kong, medical students carried out a survey, targeting young people, in order to assess their knowledge and awareness of the newly enforced anti-tobacco legislation.

We would like to take this opportunity to pledge our support to the Tobacco-Free Initiative. We are pleased to see the progress on tobacco control in this region. It is our most sincere hope that Member States can fully take up the obligations and responsibilities of the WHO Framework Convention on

WPR/RC58/NGO/14

page 2

Tobacco Control. We sincerely hope that Member States and the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office can offer us support and give us a bigger role in tobacco control in this region.

Thank you for your attention.