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**STATEMENT BY MR KOTA ICHIKAWA, REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
MEDICAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (IFMSA)**

The International Federation of Medical Students' Association (IFMSA) was founded in 1951 and is recognized by the World Health Organization as the medical students' forum for discussion of common issues within the UN system.

IFMSA exists to serve medical students all over the world through its member organizations and to promote international cooperation in the fields designated in the policy statements.

IFMSA aims:

- to be a forum for medical students throughout the world to discuss topics related to health, education and medicine, to formulate policies from such discussions and to carry out appropriate activities;
- to promote humanitarian ideals and medical ethics among medical students;
- to be a body through which cooperation and contacts with other international organizations are established;
- to act as a mechanism for member organizations to raise funds for projects recognized by IFMSA.

All activities of IFMSA are linked to one of the six Standing Committees (SCs): on Professional Exchange (SCOPE); on Electives Exchange (SCOEE); on Public Health (SCOPH); on Medical Education (SCOME), on Refugees and Peace (SCORP); and on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (SCOAS).

The Standing Committees

The Standing Committee on Professional Exchange (SCOPE) is the largest programme within IFMSA. Participation in this programme gives students a unique educational opportunity that opens doors to medical colleges, hospitals and clinics throughout the world. Every year over 5000 students participate in the programme. Most exchanges are clinical clerkships lasting one month; however preclinical exchanges and clerkships of longer duration are also possible. Students going on clerkship are offered room and board in addition to social and cultural programmes. Clerkships are given in English and in the language of the country.

The Standing Committee on Electives Exchange (SCOEE) offers intensive and highly personalized programmes that are tailored to the students' special interest. A student choosing an elective is incorporated in a research project or a clinical team for six weeks up to six months. The term "elective" implies the fact that elective courses are generally given academic credit at the students' home universities. The European Union Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) and TEMPUS (Eastern Europe) programmes such as DARC-MED or INSERT-MED and CORTEX respectively, have evolved from the IFMSA electives exchange programme.

The Standing Committee on Public Health (SCOPH) includes several programmes with relations to public health, both from educational and supporting points of view. Current projects include the Ghana Village Concept Project II, the Sudan Village Concept Project, the Calcutta Project, several projects in Brazil and the Orphanage Project in Romania. Some countries offer summer school programmes on topics such as tropical medicine, primary health care and rational use of drugs.

The Standing Committee on Medical Education (SCOME) is a forum for discussions on different methods of teaching and learning medicine and the contents of medical curricula. Every year a medical students' workshop on the future of medical education is held. Current projects are the medical education evaluation, book aid to supply eastern European medical libraries, electives in medical education, public health in medical education, and a survey on postgraduate education. In its activities SCOME collaborates with several leading organizations in the field of medical education.

The Standing Committee on Refugees and Peace (SCORP) is concerned with the plight of people living in refugee camps around the world, with particular attention to their medical needs.

Furthermore SCORP works for the prevention of war, in good collaboration with IPPNW. Among the projects organized by SCORP are workshops and congresses and trips to selected camps where students work under the supervision of doctors, providing basic medical care, vaccination, etc. Currently, SCORP is attending refugee camps in Burma, Sudan and Uganda.

The Standing Committee on AIDS and Sexually transmitted diseases (SCOAS) tries, through educational campaigns, to increase the awareness of both medical students and the general population (e.g., school children) of all problems concerning AIDS and STDs.

Publications

IFMSA's publications encourage communication between medical students and are internal information channels containing updates on the standing committees' work as well as activities in the NMOs: IFMSA Information Leaflet, IFMSA Annual Report, IFMSA Newsletter (quarterly), Medical Student International (MSI), IFMSA Blue Manual (for member organizations), IFMSA Green Manual (for Senior Officers), as well as the European Medical Curricula Access Diskette (EMCAD), which is now known under the name European Medical School Information System (EMSIS), consultable at <http://yi.com/emsis>.

Regional offices

Since 1995 the following continental medical student organizations are recognized as IFMSA Regional Offices for Africa, Europe and Latin America respectively: the Federation of African Medical Students Associations (FAMSA), the European Medical Students' Association (EMSA), Federacion Latinoamericana de Sociedades Scientificas de Estudiantes de Medicina (FELSOCEM).

External relations

IFMSA has official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) since 1969. The Federation holds a "C" status within UNESCO, and is included in its roster. IFMSA maintains working contacts with UNICEF and UNHCR. For many of its projects, IFMSA has links with ERASMUS. IFMSA is an associate member of the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS), the Network of Community-Oriented Educational Institutions for Health Sciences, the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE) and the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CP).

For several years, IFMSA has had relations with the World Medical Association (WMA), the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and the Health Action International (HAI). More recently, IFMSA has established contacts with the Permanent Working Group of European Hospital Doctors (PWG). The contacts of IFMSA also include the Association of Medical Schools in Europe (AMSE), the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) and Médecins sans frontières (MSF).

Within the student world, IFMSA initiated several intersectorial projects with fellow student organizations and is a founding member of the Intersectorial Meeting of International Student Organizations (IMISO) group. Additionally, IFMSA tries to keep contacts with other health-related student organizations (i.e., IADS, IVSA, EDS and IPSA).

Membership

IFMSA distinguishes between full, associate and candidate member organizations. Currently (General Assembly 1995), IFMSA has 52 members (40 full, six associate, six candidate). Any medical students' association has the possibility to become member of the IFMSA. There are no personal affiliates except honorary life members.