

## **WMA Statement on item 16.3 Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030): adolescents' health**

Honourable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Medical Association, which represents more than 9 million physicians from over 114 countries across the globe.

We commend WHO on the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, and note the focus on the health of adolescents worldwide for WHO's secretariat report to the Seventieth World Health Assembly.

All women, children, and adolescents have the right to attain the highest standard of health and this must be at the heart of the SDGs. We therefore welcome the recommendations of the High-Level Group on Health and Human Rights of women, Children and Adolescents favoring a human right based perspective. However, we regret that a comprehensive approach addressing the wide spectrum of social determinants of health is not clearly developed in the Global Strategy.

Furthermore, we would like to draw your attention on two critical issues that are not included in the report:

- The past several decades have witnessed a worldwide rise in adolescent suicide rates. In the adolescent population, suicide is currently one of the leading causes of death. Factors contributing to adolescent suicide include: affective disorders, low self-esteem, eating disorders, harassment, drug and alcohol abuse, or the availability of firearms. In addition, the prolonged exposure to electronic media, through the use of computer games and social media, can contribute to social isolation, school failure and malaise amongst young people. Preventing suicide requires addressing its root causes. This cannot be ignored when addressing adolescents' health.
- We note with concerns as well that the report does not refer to the role of physicians in tackling health challenges faced by adolescents. We believe that physicians and other health professionals can make a significant contribution in terms of prevention, treatment and documentation.

The WMA looks forward working with WHO on the implementation of the Global Strategy. We believe that the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents are essential to ending poverty, promoting development and resilience, and achieving the SDGs.

Thank you