

Invitation for the 71st GA March Meeting

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations is one of the world's oldest and largest student-run organizations. It represents, connects and engages every day with an inspiring and engaging network of 1.3 million medical students from 140 NMOs in 131 countries around the globe.

This year's IFMSA General Assembly in March will be held in the city of Ohrid in the Republic of North Macedonia. It is an incredible privilege and opportunity for our MMSA-Macedonia organization to be the host member to organize the 71st GA and the first General Assembly of IFMSA since the start of the COVID19 pandemic with a physical presence. The Theme of this Conference is "Survive. Thrive. Transform. Building back better for vulnerable Women and Adolescents."

Gender equity and empowerment is a goal of multisectoral approaches. Women's health, jeopardized by the social, economic, and political disadvantages, can be an influencing factor to the well-being of individuals, their household, the communities, and, grossly, the next generation. With the publication of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health, adolescents were firstly included with women and children as the vulnerable and less empowered populations in terms of health due to poverty, inequity, and marginalization.

Deprived of jobs, education, and miscellaneous social rights. Their mental health was also posed under greater challenges than ever. The lack of youth-friendly health service, friendly comprehensive policies as well as social connections, and adequate access to health information and knowledge, especially on sexual and reproductive health, pose great threats to the youth's development, safety and well-being from the causes that could have been prevented if adequate means would have been undertaken timely. During 2020, coverage of life-saving health interventions for women, children, and adolescents in 36 developing countries was estimated to have dropped by up to 25%. Recent UNFPA estimates indicate that across 115 low- and middle- income countries, the pandemic disrupted contraceptive use for about 12 million women, causing nearly 1.4 million unintended pregnancies in 2020. Similarly, according to a UNICEF, WHO, and Gavi pulse survey, three quarters of 82 surveyed countries reported covid-19 related disruptions to immunization programmes. Missing annual check-ups and not being eligible for vaccines put adolescents at a more vulnerable position than before. Additionally, UNICEF indicates a huge burden of the pandemic on the mental health of adolescents, increasing the prevalence of anxiety and depression. Healthy women, children and adolescents whose rights are protected are the very heart of sustainable development. Their inherent right to the highest attainable standard of health is enshrined in the constitution of the World Health Organization and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Moreover, the pandemic increased global poverty, putting women at higher risk. According to UN Women, more women than men lived in poverty before the pandemic with the global crisis only amplifying these hardships. Additionally, women experience gender pay gap as well as expectations for unpaid domestic and care work, impairing their economic participation further. According to the SDG report, both women and young people are at higher risk of being unemployed and were more affected by the crisis due to the pandemic. This increases the enjoyment of health of these groups as living in poverty is one of the social determinants of health. When their right to health is upheld, their access to all other human rights is also enhanced, triggering a cascade of transformative change. Survive, thrive AND transform: that is the call of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030). If rights to health and through health are upheld, delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will indeed leave no one behind. To transform our futures into more inclusive and secure, we need to learn from the hardships and mistakes that we encountered during the pandemic. Globally, millions of adolescents die or become sick from preventable causes. Too few have access to information and counselling and to integrated, youth-friendly services, and especially to sexual and reproductive health services without facing discrimination or other obstacles. Lack of data on adolescent health that results from little research done in this field hinders access to comprehensive health care as needs cannot be addressed without having sufficient data. In many settings, adolescent girls and boys face numerous policy, social and legal barriers that harm their physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. Among adolescents living with disabilities and/or in crisis situations, the barriers are even greater.

Empowerment and investment in the health and multisectoral aspects of women and adolescents will bring about high returns at the individual and community level. As one of the biggest youth organizations in the world, IFMSA has been dedicated to gender equity and advocating meaningful youth participation, to which empowerment is the first step. IFMSA will continue its initiatives creating and calling for the stakeholders to create an enabling environment for women and adolescents.

The Macedonian Medical Association (MMSA) confirms the participation of the following members of the Association of Medical Students in Bulgaria (AMSB) to the 71st General Assembly of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA), who are representing the following universities:

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

1. Aksiniya Milanova - Head of the Delegation
2. Vasil Vantchev - International Team
3. Trifon Trifonov, general delegate

Medical University of Sofia:

1. Esra Vedat, general delegate
2. Nikolay Jordanov, general delegate
3. Darina Stoyanova, general delegate
4. Valentin Kuzmanov, general delegate
5. Mihaela Tashkova, general delegate

Medical University of Pleven:

1. Kamelia Kamenova, general delegate
2. Tsvetelina Vasileva, general delegate
3. Anik Dey, general delegate

Medical University of Varna:

1. Dona Filcheva, general delegate
2. Veronika Vicheva, general delegate
3. Mila Rosenova, general delegate
4. Sindi Ivanova, general delegate

Medical University of Plovdiv:

1. Aglika Byandova, general delegate
2. Teodora Gentcheva, general delegate
3. Simona Todorova, general delegate
4. Anton Shopov, general delegate

The 71st General Assembly of the IFMSA will take place in Ohrid, North Macedonia, on the following dates:

25 February - 01 March 2022 - training sessions

01 March - 07 March 2022 - working sessions

The AMSB is expected to be presented by a full delegation.

01.02.2022

Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia



AMT DOSCE, AMT DJSOG,
AMT DJSCEDEI Michel Naydenov, MD
OC Vice-chair of the 71st GA March Meeting 2022