

TO: National advocates for children and youth
NCD Child Global Advocacy Training Champions
National and regional pediatric society presidents
Medical and pharmacy student association leaders

FROM: NCD Child
International Federation of Medical Student Associations
International Pediatric Association
International Pharmacy Students Federation
Commonwealth Youth Health Network
(additional organizational sign-on is pending)

RE: **Advocacy Alert – ACTION NEEDED - Urge UN Member States to include children, adolescents, and young people in key outcome documents**

In the March 2017 [Budva Youth Declaration](#), the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) Youth Caucus on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) highlighted the importance of addressing the growing burden of NCDs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensure healthy lives, and promote wellbeing for all people, at all ages. The declaration called on policymakers to prevent and treat NCDs through increased investment and greater policy coherence, including for governments and others to recognize the:

- Importance of childhood and adolescence in forming health-promoting and avoiding health-harming habits
- Unique needs of youth in healthcare to ensure services that are acceptable to young people
- Benefits and need for integration of the prevention and treatment of NCDs into existing youth-oriented programs and health systems
- Ensure the voices of youth are heard at all levels of society by incorporating meaningful youth participation in development and implementation of health policy (including prevention and treatment of NCDs) at local, national, and global levels.

In May 2017, an informal coalition of youth-led and youth advocacy organizations gathered during the World Health Assembly meetings in Geneva. Recognizing children, adolescents, and young people were at risk of being left behind, particularly in SDG target 3.4, which calls for a reduction by one-third of premature mortality from NCDs through prevention and treatment by 2030, and the promotion of mental health and well-being. Our organizations agreed to coordinate actions to ensure the health of children, adolescents, and young people are made a priority in the SDG and NCD high level reviews, and to encourage countries to include civil society youth-led organizations and youth advocates in country delegations for the High level meetings to review the SDGs (July 2017), the WHO Global Conference on Non-Communicable diseases in Montevideo, Uruguay (October 2017), and in other events leading up to the 2018 High-level meeting to review global progress on NCDs.

To ensure young people are not left behind in SDG/NCD actions needed by countries – it is especially important to integrate NCD prevention with other reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent population health approaches addressing prevention as well as initiation of risk factors, including for tobacco and secondhand smoke, obesity and malnutrition, mental health, and injury.

As a global health advocate and child and champion for the health of children, adolescents, and young people, your voice matters. The unique health needs and outcomes for children, adolescents, and young people need to be included as your government implements and measures the Sustainable Development Goals.

What is needed? Request a meeting as soon as possible with your national health ministry – to both explain the issue and ask their support for the inclusion of young people in these agendas. A sample advocacy letter asking for your government’s support follows this memo.

Please let your government know that they need to include children, adolescents, and young people when they implement and track the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly for [target 3.4 on non-communicable diseases](#) (NCDs) – or young people **are likely to be left out**. Right now, **we can and should ask our governments to do the following:**

- 1) For the [United Nations High Level Political Forum](#) on the Sustainable Development Agenda in New York City, July 10-19, 2017, ask your government to:
 - a. Support including language on “the prevention and treatment of NCDs for children, adolescents, and young people,” and/or recognize “this priority must address the entire life-course” for target 3.4 (NCD reduction);
 - b. Make a statement or include a point in their statements referring to the importance of young people to SDG 3 and in many other goals, and encourage countries to include youth issues in any outcome documents from the UN HLPF;
 - c. Thank your country if they presented a [voluntary review](#) on the SDGs, and let them know your organization’s interest in following their efforts to report on the SDGs.

- 2) For the [WHO Global Conference on Non-communicable Diseases](#) in Montevideo, Uruguay, October 18-20, 2017, it is important the outcome document includes recognition of what was left out in the NCD Agenda in 2011: inclusion of children, adolescents, and young people in NCD prevention and treatment planning and accountability by countries.
For this meeting, ask your government to:
 - a. Reference the importance of the prevention and treatment of NCDs for children, adolescents, and young people in the conference outcome document;
 - b. Monitor and include similar references and priorities for a whole life-course approach and inclusion of children, adolescents, and young people in the outcome documents of regional meetings leading up to and including the [Third UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs](#) in 2018; and
 - c. Bring young voices into these discussions at every level – including inviting young people from youth-led and youth advocacy organizations to their country delegations to the Uruguay meeting, regional convening, and the 2018 high-level meeting.

Here are immediate actions you can take:

- Set up a meeting with your Health Minister or their designee immediately to discuss these issues.
- Ask your country to include support of a youth focused agenda in their statement(s) at the UN HLPF in July.
- Ask your Ministry of Health to work to include children, adolescents, and young people in SDG3.4, in the NCD Agenda and the NCD Roadmap being prepared for the Uruguay meeting in October, and in the events leading up to the 2018 high level meetings on NCDs.
- If you are part of your national NCD Alliance or other coalitions supporting youth/health – ask them to also support these efforts to encourage your country’s government to include prioritizing children, adolescents, and young people in the SDG and NCD agendas.

If you have questions, please contact:

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SAMPLE FOR LETTER OR EMAIL TO NATIONAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Hon. MINISTER FULL NAME – OR YOUR BEST CONTACT
Minister of DEPARTMENT
COUNTRY
ADDRESS IF AVAILABLE

DAY, DATE, MONTH YEAR

Dear Minister LAST NAME:

I am writing as your constituent and as a representative from ORGANIZATION, an organization representing ORG MISSION, concerning COUNTRY's commitment to including children, adolescents, and young people in the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The language, specifically with regards to the health target for non-communicable diseases [SDG 3.4: By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being], in its current form, does not adequately account for the unique health challenges faced by children, adolescents, and young people. In our own nation, [INCLUDE COUNTRY-SPECIFIC DATA, IF KNOWN].

There is still time to positively impact the trajectory of the 2030 agenda in COUNTRY, so no one will be left behind, but we must act quickly and collaboratively. We would like to request that our government:

1. Include explicit language on the importance of not leaving children behind in prevention, treatment, and management of NCDs in children, adolescents, and young people during the *2017 High Level Political Forum ECOSOC* SDG review and in the high level ministerial segment; in particular, target 3.4 must recognize the entire life-course;
2. Include recognition of the needs of children, adolescents, and young people in the 2017 HLPF Ministerial Declaration;
3. Ensure the outcomes document from the *WHO Global Conference on NCDs* in Uruguay in October 2017 includes a reference to the importance of the prevention and treatment of NCDs for children, adolescents, and young people;
4. Invite youth advocates, including civil society organizations serving young people and youth-led organizations, to join our country's delegation to the Uruguay WHO Global Conference on NCDs and to the regional meetings leading up to and to the Third UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs in 2018; and
5. Highlight examples of national progress in improving health outcomes for children, adolescents, and young people;
6. Revise existing national and sub-national surveillance of NCDs and risk factor prevention to include age-disaggregated data collection going forward.

To discuss these issues further, I would like to request a meeting or call - this coming week, or at your earliest convenience. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME
AFFILIATION
CONTACT DETAILS