Concept Note for a UN Side Event

TITLE: Mental health and wellbeing:
From words to reality in people’s lives - Implementing Agenda 2030

Date: 7 September 2016
Time: 15:00 – 18:00h
Place: Conference Room 2, UN headquarters

Synopsis: With millions of people of all ages suffering from mental health conditions, the importance of this aspect of life has now been recognized at the UN. In a historic move, "mental health and wellbeing," is included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the introduction and as a development target. Additionally, mental health and wellbeing are recognized as cross cutting issues enabling many other goals, including Goal 1 (poverty eradication), Goal 2 (health), Goal 4 (education), Goal 5 (empowerment of girls and women), Goal 8 (decent work), Goal 11 (sustainable cities), Goal 13 (climate change and disaster recovery), Goal 16 (peaceful and just societies), and Goal 17 (multi-stakeholder partnerships). This side event identifies concrete steps needed to deliver on the Agenda 2030 promise of promoting mental health and wellbeing for all. Through a series of interactive panels of high-level UN representatives, academics, experts, and other stakeholders, participants will consider actions needed to realize the rights of people suffering from mental health conditions -- often those who are the furthest behind -- and to realize a better life for people everywhere through enhanced well-being. The benefits, to people, peace, and prosperity, will be highlighted in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Deliberations will inform the general debate of the 71st General Assembly as well as the work of future UN organs, including but not limited to the various commissions of ECOSOC.

Introduction: The 2030 Development Agenda adopted by the General Assembly in September 2015 is a people-centered agenda. It is therefore fitting that, in a historic move, "mental health and wellbeing" is included in this important document to guide development in the next 15 years. Specifically, five words – “promote mental health and wellbeing” appear in target 3.4 and as part of the Agenda’s introduction and mission statement. Additionally, “wellbeing” is included in the title of Goal 3 on Health. In another historic event, the World Bank and WHO held a three-day conference in April 2016, entitled “Out of the Shadows,” with the aim of making mental health a priority in the global development agenda. This meeting brought together high-level officials and representatives from government, academia, foundations, civil society, and other stakeholders who affirmed the importance of mental health and wellbeing in the global development agenda - for people, peace, and prosperity - and called for integration of mental health services into primary health care as well as increased allocation of funding. Additionally, the Sendai Framework asserted the importance of psychosocial recovery after disaster, and the recent outcome document from the World Humanitarian Summit affirmed the WHO holistic definition of health, by recognizing mental health as key to health, social, humanitarian, and economic progress. These events highlight the importance of policies and programs that advance mental health and wellbeing across all countries.

Background: Statistics about the prevalence of mental conditions worldwide are staggering. According to WHO, 151 million people suffer from depression, 26 million suffer from schizophrenia, 125 million people are affected by alcohol use disorders, 844,000 people die annually by suicide. Additionally, the number of individuals affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders, prescription and other psychoactive drug and substance abuse, and other related disabilities is growing. Of the 1.8 billion young people in the world, 1-
in-5 will experience a mental health condition during their lifetime, and less than 20% will get the help they need. Research shows that the psychosocial and mental health impacts of emergencies, disasters, diseases, and unwanted displacement, also undermine affected populations both in the short and long-term. Besides the health and social burden of mental conditions, the economic cost is high. In 2010, the global cost of mental illness was estimated at $2.5T and is projected to increase to over $6T by 2030.

Reciprocity of health and mental health: The relationship between mental health and physical health is reciprocal. Individuals suffering from mental distress are at high risk for developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and diabetes.

As a cross-cutting issue: Mental health and wellbeing is a cross-cutting issue with inter-linkages to many of the goals and targets of Agenda 2030, including education, poverty eradication, gender equality and empowerment of women, decent work, peaceful societies, and others. Delivering on mental health and well-being, is essential for realizing Sustainable Development.

Deliverables: It is now necessary to take concrete steps to implement those five words in the Agenda -- “promote mental health and wellbeing”-- into the reality of people’s lives. Dual aims are: (1) to prevent and treat serious mental health conditions, and (2) to assure people worldwide of wellbeing and a better life as a core strategy for unleashing human potential to achieve the totality of Agenda 2030. This side event will propose indicators and metrics for assuring achievement of Target 3.4; present means of implementation, including the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships (Goal 17); and identify opportunities to access funding to achieve objectives.

Sponsorship: The lead sponsors of the side event are The Permanent Mission of Palau to the United Nations, The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations, and the International Association of Applied Psychology accredited to the Economic and Social Council. Co-sponsorship opportunities are available; the final list will be released closer to the time of the event.

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Draft Program for a UN Side Event
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Objectives:
(1) Broad understanding of how mental health and wellbeing contributes to achieving the promise of Agenda 2030 across a broad range of goals and targets...
   1.1. Leave no one behind
   1.2. Reach those farthest behind first
   1.3. Strengthen human potential - everyone, everywhere - to fulfill the promise
(2) Build support for key action steps achievable in all or most settings....
   2.1. Integrate MH&WB into primary health care systems
   2.2. Integrate MH&WB into community and social development
   2.2. Build capacity, e.g., training mental health nurses, community workers, volunteers
   2.3. Provide community resilience programs
(3) Identify steps the UN system can take to ensure MH&WB is integrated with Agenda 2030 implementation

Format:
(1) Inspirational prelude (Russell Daisey)
(2) Audience engagement activity (Judy Kuriansky)

SEGMENT 1: Setting the Stage
(3) Welcome and overview of MH, WB, SDGs (H.E. Caleb Otto, Palau)
(4) Panel #1: Multi-stakeholder panel (UN, Government, Academia, Civil Society, Private Sector)

SEGMENT 2: Reaching the Farthest Behind (focus on persons suffering from serious mental issues)
(5) My Story: Voices from the field (multi-media presentation)
(6) Video (needs for MH&WB in populations, people with severe mental issues, focus LDCs)
(7) Panel #2: Mental Health, Primary Health Care, Social Development
Realizing all the rights of people suffering from mental health issues including the right to live in a just and peaceful society free from stigma, discrimination and marginalization (SDG 16, 10, 5), right to health and health care (SDG 3), right to realize basic needs (SDGS 1, 2, 6, 7, 8)
SEGMENT 3: Unleashing Human Potential (focus on MH&WB, youth, depression & suicide)

(8) My Story: Voices from the field (multi-media)
(9) Video clip
(10) Panel #3: Well being - everyone, everywhere

Cross cutting issue that supports human potential across all 17 SDGs.

SEGMENT 4: MH&WB and the Global Humanitarian Crisis

(11) My Story: Voices from the field - MH&WB and climate change
(12) Video clip - Mental Health and the Ebola Crisis (Judy Kuriansky)
(13) Panel #4: Humanitarian Segment

Cross cutting issue focusing on the mental health needs and rights of people who are victims of war, epidemics, natural disasters and climate-related trauma.

SEGMENT 5: Pulling it Together

(14) Audience responses
(15) Charting a Way Forward (H.E. Marc-Andre Blanchard, Canada)