



MINISTÉRIO DA SAÚDE
Assessoria Especial de Assuntos Internacionais

156th Session of the Executive Board

3-11 February 2025

ITEM 8 – Mental Health and Social Connection

Dear Chair,

Let me begin by thanking the Director-General for his report under this agenda item. Brazil confers high priority to the theme of mental health and social isolation. While we agree with the report that loneliness and social isolation can affect anyone, anywhere, Brazil considers relevant to mention that due to structural inequalities, loneliness is not experienced in the same way by all. Accordingly, we recommend that specific public policies and actions are considered in order to address the problem of particular groups, such as the incarcerated population; women and girls; those of African descent; Indigenous Peoples; and older persons. The links between social isolation and violence should not be neglected either. Researches show that survivors of domestic violence are at greater risk of isolation and loneliness.

The report also mentions that technology use by younger people can be a factor that places specific populations at particular risk. While Brazil agrees with this statement, we also consider relevant to acknowledge that digital transformations, to the extent of their impact on all areas of life, should be regarded as new determinants of health and their relationship with loneliness and social isolation should be closely monitored. The World Health Organization could develop and incorporate indicators on digital technology and digital environments to assess and address their



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impacts on social human interactions, as well as develop recommendations for successful and healthy integration of digital technologies in people`s daily lives, always supported by an ethical commitment to life quality, especially considering mental health aspects.

In this regard, Brazil appreciates the creation of the WHO Commission on Social Connection, as well as the resolution proposed by Chile and the US on the Essential Role of Social Connection in Combating Loneliness, Social Isolation and Inequities of Health.

Technological development and innovation should serve the well-being and quality of life of people, not the other way around. When used ethically, they have the potential to improve social and human conditions.

Thank you.