

WHO

158th session of the Executive Board

Item 7: Mental health

Italian Statement

Chair,

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU and its Member States and thanks WHO Director General for his informative report, from this year fully dedicated to mental health.

In Italy we are particularly concerned by the documented increase in anxiety, depression, self-harming and suicidal behaviors, and widespread forms of psychosocial distress among adolescents and young people.

Adolescence and young age are transitional periods when mental health vulnerability is at its highest level, but health services remain fragmented: as in many countries, our mental health and psychosocial support system for these age groups suffers from a marked regional heterogeneity, frequent intersectoral fragmentation, lack of service integration in the transition from adolescence to adulthood, limited users' involvement in service design, all impacting negatively on the continuity of healthcare paths.

We have however a number of documented, innovative and potentially scalable mental health best practices for children and adolescents, which we are ready to share for mutual learning: in these best practices integration goes beyond the clinical dimension, involving also organizational integration with schools, social services and the justice system, interprofessional integration, engagement of families and communities, and organizational cultures based on empowerment and trust. These excellences, however, often rely on ad hoc funding and outstanding individual commitment.

We want to transform our best practices into institutional mandates, structures, budgets and finally into services thanks to our newly approved Action Plan on Mental Health for the 2025-2030. Thus, dialogue with WHO Secretariat is important and can support monitoring and evaluation of the Plan through standardization, methodological quality, comparability and training. Indicators should go beyond clinical outcomes, and capture also psychosocial wellbeing and young users' satisfaction, in order to push intersectoral integration and organizational innovation, measure the quality of services, strengthen organizational learning, support policy recognition of successful models and orient national and regional policies and resources.

We look forward to a continuing dialogue in this area.

Thank you

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