



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
158 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
TANZANIA STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEM
7. Mental health
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Chairperson, The United Republic of Tanzania would like to commend the excellent preparatory work done by the secretariat and that it endorses report by the Secretary General on progress made on implementation of Mental health action plan 2013 - 2030 by the member states.

Chairperson, the United Republic of Tanzania appreciate support provided by the WHO and other UN agencies including UNODC, UNICEF and UNAIDS and other partners to address mental health, neurological and substance use challenges in the country. Technical support and collaborations on initiatives such as Epilepsy Innovation in Africa (EPIInA), perinatal mental health as well as support by UNODC, Global Fund and CDC on drug use amalgamates government commitment towards better mental health. Through government efforts and collaborations, Tanzania observed improved access to essential services for mental health, neurological and substance use disorders that include improved availability of essential medicines from 4% in 2017 to nearly 50% in 2025; boosted number of professionals for mental and psychosocial services to 6.05 experts per 100,000 population as well as establishment of strong MHPSS network in the country.

Chairperson, To curb for the huge demand and meager resources for mental health, Tanzania uses integration and decentralization of MHPSS approaches through PHC where more than 4000 healthcare workers and 1000 CHWs and

para-social workers were trained. To track progress and inform action, Tanzania strengthened Digital health systems at PHC, secondary level of care and the Unified Community System to improved data management, medicine supply, and continuity of care.

Chairperson, despite progress, Tanzania still faces high burden of mental health and neurological disorders. Recent STEPS Survey reported high prevalence of people with depression and suicide with 20.6 percent of people report experiencing depressive episodes and 13.8 percent reported experiencing suicidal ideation or attempts. Despite of the high prevalence, health seeking behaviours for mental health condition is relatively low with only 11.4 percent and 12.9 percent of people sought medical treatment and psychotherapy services respectively. These experiences are not unique to Tanzania alone, many people in sub-Saharan Africa share the same. It is very alarming situation hence may need deliberate joint efforts to address.

Chairperson in conclusion, Tanzania call upon WHO to continue providing technical support to member states on addressing this challenge in the continent and beyond.