

Thailand's Written Statement for EB158 Agenda Item 7 – Mental Health

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Thailand appreciates the comprehensive report presented in document EB158/7, which underscores the urgency of accelerating mental health system transformation. We are particularly concerned by the fact that more than 1.1 billion people globally live with mental disorders, and that suicide remains the third leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29 years. These figures clearly demonstrate that mental health must remain a central public health and development priority.

Thailand fully supports the directions outlined in the report and would like to share our national implementation experience, together with three forward-looking proposals.

First, on community-based suicide prevention. In line with the comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2030, Thailand has strengthened community-based prevention by enhancing the capacity of Village Health Volunteers and civil society actors to conduct screening, early identification, and follow-up of suicide risk at the household level. This approach complements WHO initiatives such as LIVE LIFE and mhGAP. Thailand therefore proposes that WHO further emphasize the role of non-specialist health workers in relevant resolutions and guidance, as a pragmatic response to persistent workforce shortages highlighted in the report.

Second, on integration into Universal Health Coverage. To remove financial barriers to care, Thailand has fully integrated mental health and substance use disorder services into its Universal Health Coverage system. This includes coverage across promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. In addition, Thailand is accelerating access to essential medicines for neurological disorders, in line with the intersectoral global action plan on epilepsy and other neurological disorders and the targets referenced in EB158/7.

Third, on emergency preparedness and response. Recognizing that mental health and psychosocial support must be an integral part of emergency response, Thailand has embedded the Mental Health Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (MCATT) within the national emergency medical system. This ensures that mental health care is systematically included as part of first response during natural disasters, public health emergencies, and other crises, consistent with the progress and remaining gaps identified in the report.

Finally, in response to the Executive Board's questions on integrated response and enhanced measurement, Thailand proposes the establishment of an intersectoral platform with shared indicators across relevant sectors to address common determinants of mental health, brain health, and substance use in a concrete and coordinated manner. We further support the development of standardized digital data systems that enable accurate, timely, and real-time monitoring of key indicators, reducing reliance on periodic surveys and strengthening accountability.

Thailand reaffirms its strong commitment to working closely with WHO and Member States to advance people-centred, rights-based, and community-oriented mental health systems for all.

Thank you. Mr. Chair.