International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

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## Provisional Agenda Item 18

# Mental health preparedness for and response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Documents: A74/9 and EB148/2021/REC/1, decision EB148(3)

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Statement by

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Honourable Chair, Director General, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The COVID-19 pandemic, the mitigation measures, and the resulting negative socio-relational and socioeconomic consequences have affected, are affecting and will affect the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of most people globally, as research on past epidemics, and initial evidence on the COVID-19 pandemic confirm.

Persons in vulnerable situations have faced and will face additional stressors and challenges. This is true for migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and mobile populations, for whom the negative effects of isolation, limitation of movements and stigma have been squared, and whose access to mental health care was often hindered by legal, administrative, logistical, cultural and financial obstacles already before the pandemic .

IOM strongly supports mental health action plan 2013-2030 and its call for increased awareness-raising on mental health, for the allocation of adequate funding, for mainstreaming relevant competences in other health and social care sectors, and for building response-capacities among societies, since these actions will help individuals, communities and societies to recover from COVID-19 induced mental health consequences and to increase their psychosocial resilience for future pandemics.

IOM will continue to advocate and be vigilant so that these efforts do not leave migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and mobile populations behind, and that systems that are being created are legally inclusive of all migrants

irrespective of status, logistically accessible and known to migrants, and aware of cultural differences, towards a truly universal health coverage.