Statement of Belgium

Chair,

_Belgium aligns itself with the statement delivered by Sweden on behalf of the EU and its Member States._

Due to the importance of the topic, we would like to focus our intervention on mental health.

Belgium regrets that political attention, investments and international funding for mental health are still lagging behind. And this, despite the serious disruption in mental health services faced during the covid 19 pandemic, coupled with an increase in depression and anxiety. We are particularly concerned by the mental health of young people in this time of ‘perma-crisis’.

We hope that the on-going preparation of a resolution on mental health for the UN General Assembly will provide an opportunity to spotlight mental health at the highest level. We encourage WHO to play an active role to support the importance of a rights-based approach, addressing the needs of people with mental conditions while avoiding stigmatization, ableism and over-medicalization.

Care for mental health must be integrated in a continuum of coordinated and multisectoral persons-centered services, providing quality care for all, with full involvement of the users and a priority given to community-based approaches.

We also need to promote mental health and develop preventive policies in all settings, including at the workplace, at school, in living environments and in care services. For instance, we could implement a ‘right to disconnect’ for workers
outside the working hours, as we did in Belgium for federal civil servants, in order to prevent excessive pressure and preserve a separation between home and work.

To support the public mental health policies at national level, we suggest that WHO develops multi-sectoral “best buys”, such as for the prevention of other NCDs, which are evidence-based, cost-effective, consistent and become standard policy options.