

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

GENEVA, 18 - 23 MAY 2026

Agenda item 12.2 - Mental Health

Statement by Portugal

Chair,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
distinguished delegates,

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered under this agenda item on behalf of the European Union.

Portugal is grateful to the Director-General for the report and welcomes the attention given to mental health as a public health priority.

Mental health needs are increasing, particularly among young people, while countries remain off track in achieving the targets of the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030. This requires political leadership, predictable investment, and the integration and scaling up of mental health services into universal health coverage and primary health care systems.

Portugal supports a rights-based, person-centred and community-based transformation of mental health care. In Portugal, this is reflected in the ongoing reform: strengthening community mental health teams, improving continuity between primary care, specialised care and social support, and moving from institutional responses towards care delivered closer to communities.

We also underline the importance of addressing the social and commercial determinants that shape mental health through whole-of-government and whole-of-society action. Mental health policy must be connected to education, employment, housing, social protection, justice and emergency preparedness.

Portugal welcomes the work of the World Health Organization on QualityRights, suicide prevention, child and adolescent mental health, and psychosocial support across the emergency continuum. We

encourage WHO to continue supporting Member States with practical tools, technical guidance and mechanisms for monitoring and assessing progress.

Mental health must no longer be treated as marginal. It is central to health, dignity, resilience and sustainable development. Portugal remains committed to working with WHO and all Member States to translate commitments into accessible and equitable care based on a human rights approach for all.

Thank you.

[272 words]