

# MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN 2013 - 2020



World Health  
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**2013 – 2020**



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## FOREWORD



Mental well-being is a fundamental component of WHO's definition of health. Good mental health enables people to realize their potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their communities.

Mental health matters, but the world has a long way to go to achieve it. Many unfortunate trends must be reversed—neglect of mental health services and care, and abuses of human rights and discrimination against people with mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities.

This comprehensive action plan recognizes the essential role of mental health in achieving health for all people. It is based on a life-course approach, aims to achieve equity through universal health coverage and stresses the importance of prevention.

Four major objectives are set forth: more effective leadership and governance for mental health; the provision of comprehensive, integrated mental health and social care services in community-based settings; implementation of strategies for promotion and prevention; and strengthened information systems, evidence and research.

Although the targets of this action plan are ambitious, WHO and its Member States are committed to fulfilling them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Chan".

**Dr Margaret Chan**

*Director-General*

*World Health Organization*

## SETTING THE SCENE

**01** In May 2012, the Sixty-fifth World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA65.4 on the global burden of mental disorders and the need for a comprehensive, coordinated response from health and social sectors at the country level. It requested the Director-General, inter alia, to develop a comprehensive mental health action plan, in consultation with Member States, covering services, policies, legislation, plans, strategies and programmes.

**02** This comprehensive action plan has been elaborated through consultations with Member States, civil society and international partners. It takes a comprehensive and multisectoral approach, through coordinated services from the health and social sectors, with an emphasis on promotion, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, care and recovery. It also sets out clear actions for Member States, the Secretariat and international, regional and national level partners, and proposes key indicators and targets that can be used to evaluate levels of implementation, progress and impact. The action plan has, at its core, the globally accepted principle that there is "no health without mental health".<sup>1</sup>

**03** The action plan has close conceptual and strategic links to other global action plans and strategies endorsed by the Health Assembly, including the global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol, the global plan of action for workers' health, 2008–2017, the action plan for the global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, 2008–2013, and the global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases (2013–2020). It also draws on WHO's regional action plans and strategies for mental health and substance abuse that have been adopted or are being developed. The action plan has been designed to create synergy with other relevant programmes of organizations in the United Nations system, United Nations interagency groups and intergovernmental organizations.

**04** The action plan builds upon, but does not duplicate, the work of WHO's mental health gap action programme (mhGAP). The focus of the latter was to expand services for mental health in low resource settings. The action plan is global in its scope and is designed to provide guidance for national action plans. It addresses, for all resource settings, the response of social and other relevant sectors, as well as promotion and prevention strategies.

**05** In this action plan, the term "mental disorders" is used to denote a range of mental and behavioural disorders that fall within the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth revision (ICD-10). These include disorders that cause a high burden of disease such as depression, bipolar affective disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, dementia, substance use disorders, intellectual disabilities, and developmental and behavioural disorders with onset usually occurring in childhood and adolescence, including autism. For dementia and substance use disorders, additional prevention strategies may also be required (as described, for example, in a WHO report on dementia issued in early 2012<sup>2</sup> and in the global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol). Furthermore, the plan covers suicide prevention and many of the actions are also relevant to conditions such as epilepsy. The term "vulnerable groups" is used in the action plan to refer to individuals or

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