

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL LEADERS UNITE UNDER #FUNDAMENTALSDG TO CREATE GLOBAL MOVEMENT IN INCLUSION OF MENTAL HEALTH IN THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Leaders call for support for global movement in most important mental health initiative addressing world's biggest single cause of reduced lifespan

09/09/2014 London/ Geneva —

Mental health leaders and advocates gathered in Geneva, Switzerland this past week as the *“Preventing Suicide, A Global Imperative”* report was publicly released by the World Health Organization (WHO) after the WHO launched implementation discussions of the Global Mental Health Action Plan adopted by the United Nations 66th assembly last year. Today, leaders join together under a new group [#FundaMentalSDG](#) to advocate adding clear, measurable mental health targets to the United Nations Post Millennium 2015 development goals currently in development and about to be negotiated by UN member states, following the UN High-level Stocktaking Event on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in New York on 11 – 12 September 2014.

According to the report by WHO, suicide is preventable, mental health disorders are treatable, and yet because we don't significantly address it we lose over 800,000 lives annually, it is the second leading cause of death globally for youth ages 15-29, and is estimated to cost the United States alone over 100 billion dollars every year. #FundaMentalSDG invites other organizations, institutions, and world leaders to unite by collectively asking the United Nations to include a specific mental health target and two indicators in this critical post-millennium agenda.



Photo 1: Credits MHaPP/UCT

The #FundaMentalSDG group was developed as world leaders agree we must take a collaborative, multi-sectoral approach in elevating the work done in mental health. Dr. Shekhar Saxena, Director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance abuse, states in the Global Suicide Report: “This report, the first WHO publication of its kind, presents a comprehensive overview of suicide, suicide attempts and successful suicide prevention efforts worldwide. We know what works. Now is the time to act”.

The July 19th 2014 United Nations draft of the Post-Millennium Goals includes an overall Health Goal: *‘Proposed goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages’*. A recent Editorial in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) by Professors Graham Thornicroft and Vikram Patel, of King’s College London and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine respectively, calls upon colleagues worldwide to include within this Health Goal the following specific mental illness **target**:

‘The provision of mental and physical health and social care services for people with mental disorders, in parity with resources for services addressing physical health.’

They also propose that this is directly supported by **2 indicators** related to the WHO Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020, adding that it is very difficult to achieve results without specific measurements:

- (1) 'To ensure that service coverage for people with severe mental disorders in each country will have increased to at least 20% by 2020 (including a community orientated package of interventions for people with psychosis; bipolar affective disorder; or moderate-severe depression).'**
- (2) 'To increase the amount invested in mental health (as a % of total health budget) by 100% by 2020 in each low and middle income country'**

According to Thornicroft and Patel's article in the BMJ, there is compelling evidence to show that improved global mental health is a necessity for overall human and societal development. For example, "poorer mental health is a precursor to reduced resilience to conflict," and not only that, "it is also a barrier to achieving the suggested goal for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

In a Policy Brief produced by #FundaMentalSDG entitled "Call to Action: The Need to Include Mental Health Target and Indicators in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals", it reviews the high prevalence of mental illness (1 in four people experience mental illness in their lifetime), the global emergency mental illness is causing insofar as human rights violations, stigma and discrimination, and the fact that mental illness can reduce lifespan by 20 years. Further, the brief points out that in low and middle income countries, up to 98 percent of people with mental health problems do not receive any treatment, as evidenced research proofs. Mental health has impact across the whole range of SDGs, and thus can be seen as a cross cutting issue.

#FundaMentalSDG is an initiative which aims to include a specific mental health target in the post-2015 SDG agenda. The initiative is committed to the principle that there can be no health without mental health, and no sustainable development without including mental health into the post-2015 SDG agenda. The #FundaMentalSDG initiative is led by the #FundaMentalSDG Steering Group, composed of leaders in the field of global mental health, drawn from a wide range of service user, caregiver, advocacy, policy, service delivery and research organizations.

To support the initiative, visit www.fundamentalsdg.org/show-your-support and take action today.

For more information, see www.fundamentalsdg.org, www.facebook.com/fundamentalsdg, and twitter.com/FundaMentalSDG and be sure to use hashtag #FundaMentalSDG in communication efforts.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Nicole Votruba
#FundaMentalSDG Co-ordinator
fundamentalsdg@gmail.com
www.fundamentalsdg.org
www.facebook.com/fundamentalsdg
twitter.com/FundaMentalSDG