Agenda Item:
20.3.2.4 G. Comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2020 (resolution WHA66.8 (2013))

Statement:

Global Health Council thanks you for the opportunity to comment on agenda item 20.3 F. In light of the imminent conclusion of the period covered by the current action plan, we believe that it is high time for reflections on our strategies to tackle one of the biggest sources of global disease burden. Today, mental health remains greatly overlooked and underfunded. Despite the comprehensiveness of the action plan, the extent to which this is translated into policies and funding vary greatly from one member state to another.

● We urge the WHO to strengthen political will of investing in mental health among member states through closer monitoring, more vigorous discussions, and closer collaboration with civil societies and academic institutions.
● Furthermore, we call upon the WHO and its member states to adopt a syndemics framework in future endeavours of mental health promotion. That is to acknowledge and work upon the interactions between mental health and other health issues, one of the most relevant being NCDs. We noticed that the NCDs-related guidelines devised by the WHO, such as the 4 by 4 shared risk factors and the 25 by 25 target in the global action plan for NCDs, cover a great deal of issues related to mental health while failing to recognise their mental health implications. Alcohol use, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and unhealthy diet all have significant impacts on mental health and can only be effectively managed with that in mind.
● As the current action plans on NCDs and mental health will both expire in 2020, the future guidelines for these two health issues should be discussed and constructed jointly with interconnected targets, indices, and strategies.
● Finally, we consider the forthcoming High-level Meeting on NCDs a critical instance to highlight this interconnectedness between mental health and other health issues. We urge the WHO and its member states to seize the opportunity to initiate this paradigm shift.