



United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2014

Panel Discussion: "Mental Well-being and Disability: Toward Accessible and Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals"

2 December 2014, 13:15 to 15:00
Conference Room 8, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Co-organized by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations University International Institute for Global Health, The World Bank Tokyo Development Learning Center, and co-sponsored by Permanent Mission of Argentina to the UN, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN

Agenda

- Moderator: Dr. Takashi Izutsu, Senior Knowledge Management Officer, The World Bank Tokyo Development Learning Center
- 13:15 – 13:20 **Opening Remarks:** Ms. Akiko Ito Chief, Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations
- Panel Discussion**
- 13:20 – 13:30 H.E. Mr. Mateo Estreme, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations
- 13:30 – 13:40 Ms. Saima Wazed Hossain, Chair of the National Advisory Committee on Autism in Bangladesh
- 13:40 – 13:50 Dr. Atsuro Tsutsumi, Coordinator, United Nations University International Institute for Global Health
- 13:50 – 14:00 Dr. Mark van Ommeren, Scientist, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, World Health Organization (recorded presentation)
- 14:00 – 14:10 Prof. Harry Minas, Head, Global and Cultural Mental Health Unit, School of Population and Global Health, The University of Melbourne
- 14:10 – 14:20 Ms. Laura Upans, Department of Justice Canada
- Respondents**
- 14:20 – 14:25 Dr. Kamal Lamichhane, Research Fellow, Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute
- 14:25 – 14:30 Ms. Kathryn Goetzke, Founder and Interim Executive Director, International Foundation for Research and Education on Depression
- 14:30 **Q & A**

Draft Background Note

Background

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is celebrated annually on 3 December around the world to promote awareness and mobilize support on critical issues pertaining to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development.

As part of the IDPD programme at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, a panel discussion will be held under the theme “Mental well-being and disability: toward accessible and inclusive Sustainable Development Goals”. The panel is co-organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations University International Institute for Global Health, the World Bank Tokyo Development Learning Center, and co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the UN, and the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN.

Panel Discussion: “Mental well-being and disability: toward accessible and inclusive SDGs”

Globally, an estimated one in two people will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime. Annually, approximately one million people die due to suicide which is higher than the number of deaths related to war or murder. Economic loss due to problems related to mental well-being is vast: Direct and indirect cost of mental ill-health is more than 4%, and a recent study estimated that the cumulative global impact of mental disorders in terms of lost economic output will amount to US\$16.3 trillion between 2011 and 2030, while reasonable investment could contribute to better mental well-being. Additionally, there are strong stigma and discriminations against persons with mental or intellectual disabilities. In particular in disaster and conflict settings, protection of persons with mental or intellectual disabilities is often neglected.

The genuine achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals requires the inclusion of the rights, well-being, and the perspective of persons with disabilities including persons with mental or intellectual disabilities in development efforts at all levels. The recently proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also focus in Goal 3: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” on mental health by proposing to “by 2030 reduce by one-third pre-mature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and wellbeing”.

The economic, social and health impact of poor mental well-being is pervasive and far reaching, leading to poverty, high unemployment rates, poor educational and health outcomes. Mental well-being represents a critical indicator and a key determinant of well-being, quality of life, hope, and sustainable development. However, despite this close link between mental well-being and disability with development, the mental aspects have long been neglected in development discourse. Successful and sustainable development policies and programmes require a renewed prioritization of mental well-being and disability.

The panel discussion aims to bring attention to this often complex and neglected topic of mental well-being, disability and development with a particular focus on the role of the SDGs. The panel will identify key issues and trends on mental well-being as well as its relevance in promoting an inclusive path to development. The panellists will focus on practical strategies and actions points for mainstreaming mental well-being and disability in development priorities.