



41th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council (24 June- 12 July 2019)

Oral statement delivered by Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

ITEM 3: ID with SR on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

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Mr President,

APG23 takes note of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health in which he elaborates on the critical role of the social and underlying determinants of health in advancing the realization of the right to mental health.¹

Rightly the SR emphasizes the importance of relationships and inclusiveness in regards to mental health-

According to WHO "Multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point of time." "Poor mental health is also associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, gender discrimination, social exclusion, unhealthy lifestyle, physical ill-health and human rights violations."²

Vulnerable people such as old people, persons with disabilities, people in conflict zones, people on the move are often excluded from social connections and relationships and their mental health put at risk. People are left far behind and excluded from social life due to a number of reasons, among which, political narratives that fuel discrimination and exclusion attitudes.

Intolerance, xenophobia and a culture of indifference towards one another are threatening the human family in its core values. There is the urgent need to advocate at national and international level for reducing inequalities and promoting solidarity and brotherhood in the attempt of leaving no one behind and in order to promote and protect the right to physical and mental health of all along with all the other rights.

We would like to recall the words of Pope Francis: "As creatures endowed with inalienable dignity, we are related to all our brothers and sisters, for whom we are responsible and with whom we act in solidarity. Lacking this relationship, we would be less human. We see, then, how indifference represents a menace to the human family."³

Furthermore, the violation of the right to health strictly related to the social determinants of health, has its main root causes especially in developing countries in the lack of an enabling international and national environment and the existence of structural obstacles (financial, economic, political etc.). For this reason, the implementation of the Right to Development is essential for the respect, protection and fulfilment of the right to health and for addressing the social determinants of health.

We would like the Special Rapporteur to comment on which policies Governments should implement to effectively tackle the issue of the determinants of mental health specifically regarding stigma, isolation and discrimination? Thank you!

¹ A/HRC/41/34

² <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>

³ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20151208_messaggio-xlix-giornata-mondiale-pace-2016.html