



Mental Health and Well-being at the Heart of the SDGs: **CONCRETE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

OVERVIEW:

In a historic move, **"promote mental health and well-being"** is included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the introduction, Goal 3, and Target 3.4. Additionally, mental health and well-being are recognized as cross-cutting issues supporting other goals, including Goal 1 (poverty eradication), Goal 2 (nutrition), Goal 3 (health), Goal 4 (education), Goal 5 (empowerment of girls and women), Goal 8 (decent work), Goal 11 (sustainable cities), Goal 12 (sustainable production and consumption), Goal 13 (climate change and disaster risk reduction), Goal 14 (sustainable oceans), Goal 15 (sustainable land), Goal 16 (peaceful and just societies), and Goal 17 (multi-stakeholder partnerships).

This side event, sponsored by the Missions of Palau and Canada to the United Nations and the International Association of Applied Psychology, brought together ambassadors, international experts, and cultural performers to consider concrete means of delivering on the 2030 promise of mental health and well-being for all.



Canada



Celebrating a Historic Event

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by world leaders on 25 September 2015. The Agenda contains a promise to "promote mental health and well-being". This side event at the United Nations was the first to focus on this promise.

The event brought together UN Ambassadors, representatives of the World Health Organization, the Clinton Global Initiative, the International Association of Applied Psychology, and civil society organizations from around the world. Presenters emphasized the centrality of mental health and well-being as

the "heart of the 2030 Agenda", highlighted the inter-linkages between mental health and well-being and other goals and targets, and presented concrete means of implementation featuring real programs serving real people.

The event was divided into three segments. The opening featured cultural performances by New York City youth and musicians together with welcoming remarks by H.E. Marc-André Blanchard (Canada), Ms. Daniela Bas (UN-DESA), H.E. Dr. Caleb Otto (Palau), and Dr. Judy Kuriansky (IAAP). The second segment featured a panel discussions on "Well-being at the

Heart of the 2030 Agenda" moderated by H.E. Dr. Caleb Otto. The third segment, moderated by Dr. Kuriansky, featured cost-effective programs to be scaled up or replicated to deliver on the promise of mental health and well-being for all.

All speakers acknowledged in glowing terms the historic nature of the 2030 Agenda promise to end the suffering of millions of people left behind as a result of mental health conditions.



Sponsors: H.E. Marc-André Blanchard (Canada), Dr. Judy Kuriansky (IAAP), H.E. Dr. Caleb Otto (Palau).

Photo credit: Rose Billings

Agenda 2030

In Paragraph 7 of the Preamble, the vision for the 2030 world includes a world "where physical, mental, and social well-being are assured." SDG 3 states "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all." Target 3.4 states "By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being."

Recommendations: Way Forward

A key recommendation emphasized throughout is the urgent need to accelerate work and funding to **integrate mental health services into primary health care, community services, and humanitarian and disaster responses**. Only through integration will it be possible to reach those "furthest behind" and those who are the most vulnerable, including children, elderly, disabled, and persons affected by humanitarian, climate,

and natural disasters. To build momentum toward this end, participants recommended:

- (1) a General Assembly resolution on mental health and well-being to ensure continuing focus by the UN system;
- (2) strengthened partnerships between governments, civil society, and the UN system;
- (3) future side events to illustrate the role of mental health and well-being in the context of

- poverty eradication, decent work, gender equality, climate action, and other targets of the 2030 agenda including the promise to "leave no one behind";
- (4) future side events on mental health and well-being in the context of major UN meetings (e.g. Commission on Social Development, Commission on Status of Women, and other relevant forums).



Opening led by performers from the Rybin School of Drama, musicians, and Russell Daisey performing his original anthem “Happy People, Happy Planet”.

Photo credit: Mamadou Dabo

**“The heart is a great enabler.
For the next 15 years, I want
everyone to think of the
sustainable development goals
as the affairs of the heart.”**

H.E. Dr. Caleb Otto
Keynote Remarks



(Back): H.E. Maria Lopez de Jesus Pires (Timor-Leste), Mr. Mekinda Mekinda, Jr., (Power Africa Youth), H.E. Jean-Francis Zinsou (Benin), Dr. Judy Kuriansky (IAAP), H.E. Louis G. Brown (Liberia), (Front): Mr. Jim Luce (Lions International) pictured with “Hugg-A-Planet” globes invented by Mr. Robert Forenza.

Photo Credit: Mamadou Dabo

Opening Segment: Mental Health, Mental Wellness, and Well-being

H.E. Marc-André Blanchard (Canada) in welcoming remarks set an inspiring tone by calling for “mental wellness”—a phrase that resonated throughout the event. He noted that one-in-five Canadians will suffer from a mental health condition at some point in their lives often “suffering in silence from an illness that is invisible to others”. He also noted that vast numbers of people suffer from mental health conditions due to wars, natural disasters, forced migration, and other crises and called for integration of mental health services into humanitarian, resettlement, and peacekeeping operations. He declared his country’s commitment to breaking down stigma and discrimination and expanding access to mental health care.

Dr. Kuriansky and H.E. Dr. Caleb Otto, Co-Chairs of the Friends of Mental Health and Well-being Group during SDG negotiations, provided a historic backdrop for the event by describing the inter-governmental advocacy leading to inclusion of mental health in the 2030 Agenda, This work was further described in a video, “Youth Mental Health: United Nations Ambassadors and Youth Speak Out”.

Ms. Daniela Bas, Director of the Department of Social Policy and Development (UN-DESA), emphasized the importance of strong national social development policies for meeting mental health needs, especially of marginalized groups—youth, elderly, indigenous peoples. She suggested that the Commission on Social Development can provide oversight

for implementing the mental health and well-being target of the 2030 Agenda.

In a major show of support, H.E. Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) talked about the special needs of refugees and suggested as many as 50% could benefit from mental health services. He emphasized the strong commitment of his country and his Queen to mental health and wellness. Queen Mathilde is a psychologist and former speech therapist.

H.E. Jane Chigiya (Micronesia) expressed alarm at high rates of suicide across Micronesia, especially among young males, and observed that hers is a culture where people “don’t talk about their problems openly”. She further underscored the increasing mental health challenges caused by stress arising from climate change and increasingly frequent natural disasters.

H.E. Ambassador Jean-Francis Zinsou (Benin) noted that people in Least Developed Countries face hardships everyday and are at special risk of mental health conditions; 75% of suicides occur in low and middle income countries. H.E. Laura Flores (Panama) observed that everyone is affected by mental health conditions if not directly, than indirectly through an affected loved one. H.E. Maria Lopez de Jesus Pires (Timor-Leste), a former counselor, and H.E. Louis Brown (Liberia) highlighted the special need for mental health services in countries that have suffering the trauma of war.

Keynote: Making SDGs the “Affairs of the Heart”

H.E. Dr. Caleb Otto (Palau) noted that in the Palauan language there are a large number of words that express well-being through the use of *reng* (Palauan for heart). Palauans, together with many of the world’s philosophers and great religions, recognize that human beings are comprised of body, heart, and soul and that well-being depends on the health of all three. To achieve the transformation envisaged by the 2030 Agenda, it is necessary to consider “affairs

of the heart” in addition to the physical needs of the body but the Ambassador observed that of the 169 targets of the Agenda, only 25 address “affairs of the heart”. While the Agenda cannot be amended now, “affairs of the heart” can be addressed as we implement the agenda “on the ground” with special emphasis on meeting the needs of those who suffer from mental health conditions—often those who are the furthest behind.



Actions on the Ground: Concrete Means of Implementation

The heart of the event were inspiring stories from the ground—real people and real programs that fulfill the promise of mental health and well-being while addressing other sustainable development targets. Among recurring themes....

- The power of laypeople, properly supported, to deliver mental health services, including psychological first aid during crises;
- Importance of integrating mental health services into primary health care and other community services;
- Importance of integrating mental health services into humanitarian, peacekeeping, and disaster recovery actions;
- Good examples of concrete means of implementation exist on the ground but resources are needed for scale-up and replication.

Ka'nahsohon Kevin Deer faith-keeper of the Iroquois Confederacy (Quebec) led off the panel by demonstrating indigenous healing rituals used by his people.

Dr. Peter Singer, CEO of Grand Challenges Canada (GCC), called passionately for indicators for Target 3.4. He proposed that success in 2030 would be to “flip the gap”, meaning that if 95% of people today

needing mental health services do not receive services, “flip the gap” so that by 2030, 95% of people in need do receive services while only 5% do not. GCC identifies promising innovations in developing countries and supports them to grow to scale, emphasizing partnerships with sub-national governments. Over the past five years, GCC has invested C\$39 in 71 projects in 28 countries, helping to raise Canada to being among the top three funders of mental health services in low and middle income countries. To illustrate the GCC “Bold Ideas with Big Impact” approach, he shared project examples where local governments are carrying projects to scale thereby “flipping the gap” in their communities.

Organizational psychologist **Dr. Walter Reichman** presented seven innovative programs to demonstrate the inter-linkages between mental health and other SDGs including poverty eradication, decent work, and disaster resilience. These diverse initiatives include: young leaders development in Kenya; entrepreneurship in Uganda; girls' empowerment in Lesotho; campaigning for wage parity in Papua New Guinea; post-hurricane pet recovery in Louisiana; a work initiative for homeless in Minneapolis; and a refugee initiative in Great Britain.

Continued on next page

International Support and Commitment

Werner Obermeyer representing the World Health Organization highlighted the urgency for mental health action: (1) between 1990 and 2013, the number of people worldwide suffering from depression and anxiety disorders increased by nearly 50%; (2) in both rich and poor countries, there is a huge gap between need for mental health services and access to services; and (3) this treatment deficit comes at a high economic cost—depression and anxiety alone result in nearly \$1 trillion dollars in economic losses annually. WHO has adopted a comprehensive mental health action plan (2013-2020) endorsed by nearly 200

**“no health
without mental
health” (WHO)**

countries and published a set of resources to assist low and middle income countries scale up services through the primary health care system. To raise awareness, depression will be the theme for a year-long campaign and World Health Day 2017.

Emily Dery noted that the Clinton Global Initiative has historically addressed mental health as part of non-communicable diseases from the perspective of workplace wellness. Responding to the SDGs, CGI is elevating mental health to become one of its core pillars with recent announcement of two new multi-stakeholder partnerships around mental health.



Ka'nahsohon Kevin Deer of the Iroquois Confederacy (Quebec) supported by volunteers from the audience demonstrates indigenous healing rituals from his people.

Photo credit: Mangala Weerasekera



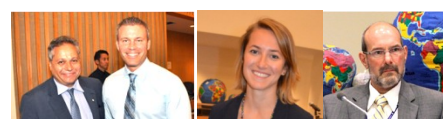
Civil society panelists: Dr. Walter Reichman (OrgVitality), Ka'nahsohon Kevin Deer (Iroquois Confederacy), Dr. Inka Weissbecker (International Medical Corps), Dr. Judy Kuriansky (IAAP), Father Jean-Charles Wismick (CESSA-Haiti), Ms. Marie Louise Ocran (New Life International), Mr. Mekinda Mekinda, Jr. (Power African Youth).

Photo credit: Mamadou Dabo



Ms. Daniela Bas, Director of Social Policy and Development, UN-DESA demonstrates an alternate, more inclusive form of applause.

Photo credit: Mamadou Dabo



(Left to right): Dr. Peter Singer (GCC), Dr. David Dozois (President, Canada Psychological Association), Ms. Emily Dery (Clinton Global Initiative), Mr. Werner Obermeyer (World Health Organization).

Photo credits: (1) Mangala Weerasekera, (2) Rose Billings, (3) Mangala Weerasekera

A SINCERE THANK YOU TO ALL

MASTER OF CEREMONY

Mr. Shannon LaNier, TV host and author

SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS

U.N. Permanent Representatives

H.E. Marc-André BLANCHARD (Canada)
H.E. Louis G. BROWN (Liberia)
H.E. Marc Pecsteen de BUYTSWERVE (Belgium)
H.E. Jane CHIGIYAL (Micronesia)
H.E. Laura FLORES (Panama)
H.E. Maria Helena LOPEZ de JESUS PIRES (Timor-Leste)
H.E. Jean-François ZINSOU (Benin)

International Organizations

Ms. Daniela BAS, Director, Department of Social Policy and Development, UN-DESA
Ms. Emily DERY, Clinton Global Initiative
Mr. Werner H. OBERMEYER, WHO UN Office

Civil Society

Ka'na'hoon Kevin DEER, Five Nation Iroquois Confederacy
Dr. David DOZOIS, President, Canada Psychological Association
Mr. Robert FORENZA, President, Hugg-A-Planet
Dr. Janel GAUTHIER, President, IAAP
Father Wismick JEAN-CHARLES, CESSA, (Haiti)
Mr. Mekinda MEKINDA, Jr., Power African Youth
Ms. Marie Louise OCRAN, More to Life International
Dr. Walter REICHMAN, Vice-President, OrgVitality
Dr. Peter SINGER, Grand Challenges Canada
Mr. Timothy TO, Post Crisis Counseling Network (Hong Kong)
Dr. Inka WEISSBECKER, International Medical Corps

ENTERTAINMENT

Musicians and Singers

Director: Mr. Russell DAISEY, Composer and Musician
Singers: Christa VICTORIA, Daniel BRYSON, Leslie COOPER, Eve HARRISON, Yukino KIKUTA
Musicians: Ippei ICHIMARU, , Hillario SOTO,
Guruji-Rev Dr. Dileepkumar THANKAPPAN

Youth Performers

Director: Susan RYBIN, Rybin School of Drama
Youth: Lesli HERNANDEZ, Georgina MAYSONET,
Nathaniel MOGOLLAN, Adriana del ORDEN, Alan ROSAS,
Arlette SOSA

MEDIA AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Rose BILLINGS, Jimmy CHU, Remi CUCUI,
Mamadou DALLO, Cyrille PETTA, Paul SLADKUS,
Mangala WEERASEKERA

VOLUNTEERS

J. Luce Foundation Young Global Leaders & the New York Tribeca Campus Lions Club

Supervisors: Sue JENNER, Jim LUCE
Students: Ilyasse BENEZHA, Robyn BONNER,
Sulaiminah BURNS, Valentin CAMANO, Matthew DOSIKAS,
Lina ESCOBAR, Milagros ARCIA_GCHANGLERTH,
Jasmin GOMEZ, Joshua MARMOROSA, Paolo MECENERO,
Robert NA, Justin OTERO, Annabel OSARIO, Dedushi RRON,
Israel SANTANA, Xiaobing TAN, Nicholas VAZQUEZ,

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Dr. Judy KURIANSKY, Ms. Kenlie LIPIANO,
H.E. Dr. Caleb OTTO, Dr. Judy OTTO, Mr. Byeonghyeon SO,
Ms. Leyla WAHEDI, Mr. Joel ZINSOU

These examples, drawn from the rapidly expanding field of humanitarian work psychology, demonstrate the interrelationships between mental health, well-being, poverty eradication, and decent work targets of the 2030 Agenda.

Continuing the focus on mental health, well-being, decent work, and poverty eradication, **Mr. Mekinda Mekinda, Jr.** (Power African Youth) described his work to connect young African entrepreneurs with mentors, sponsors, and funding in the United States and elsewhere. One of their mentees, **Ms. Marie Louise Ocran**, founder of More to Life International, shared her personal story about recovery from depression and her work to promote youth resilience through anti-bullying education, self-esteem promotion, and suicide prevention.

Dr. Inka Weissbecker (International Medical Corps) described her organization's work in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia to meet the mental health needs of refugees and people suffering from natural disasters and other crises. IMC focuses on advocacy, training, support, and integration of mental health into primary health care. IMC also develops mental health promotional materials.

Father Wismick Jean-Charles, Haitian Catholic priest and Vice Provost of the University of Notre Dame of Haiti, described his work with Dr. Kuriansky training volunteers to provide psycho-social support after the 2010 Haitian earthquake which exacerbated pre-existing unmet needs for mental health services. He subsequently founded the Center for Spirituality and Mental Health (CESSA in French) and began a new Department of Psychology at the University of Notre Dame Haiti. These initiatives aim to build community self reliance and resilience by training and empowering local leaders (including clergy, teachers, and young professionals) to offer services, mobilizing local resources, and developing sustainable culturally appropriate "best practices".

Other International Messages

A number of participants traveled from afar to attend the event. **Dr. David Dozois**, President of the Canadian Psychological Association, called for increased parity between mental and physical health funding and better access to services. **Timothy To**, founder and executive director of the Post-Crisis Counseling Network in Hong Kong, traveled from Hong Kong specifically for the event. He described his work to recruit and train volunteers to provide psychosocial support to survivors after natural disasters in Nepal, the Philippines, China, and Japan, but lamented the lack of adequate resources to support this work. **Robert Forenza**, founder of Hugg-A-Planet (Vermont), talked about his advocacy for people and planet using soft "huggable" globes and cards imprinted with inspirational messages. Inspired by the vision by his elderly mother, the globes are distributed to schools worldwide and have gone "out of this world" via the space station. Another goodwill message was brought by psychologist **Dr. Yuwanna Migvanyi** on behalf of the Nigerian Psychological Association and the Intervention Centre for Children and Women in Africa. She stated "the UN has proven its maturity in promoting partnerships for positive human development" but appealed for more support for mental health and well-being programs, especially in Sub-Sahara Africa. **Dr. Janel Gauthier**, President of IAAP, could not attend but provided a message read by **MC Shannon LaNier** noting worldwide suffering and highlighting the significance of the event in presenting concrete examples of how to turn five words "promote mental health and well-being" into reality in people's lives.

Contact Information

A four-page summary cannot do justice to a three-hour event. For more information, contact: the Palau Mission to the UN at PROffice@palauun.org or view the event video at <http://webtv.un.org/> (enter "Palau" into the search box).