

Ban calls for donor support to treat mental disorders in developing countries



Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon

10 October 2009 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon used World Mental Health Day today to appeal for donor support to care for such disorders in developing countries and among lower income groups.

“Mental disorders contribute more to disease burden and disability in developing countries than any other category of non-communicable disease, yet only a small minority of people with mental disorders in these countries have access to mental health services. The need is high, and care is inadequate,” he said in a message marking the occasion.

“Governments and public health organizations, civil society, multilateral agencies and donors must join hands to make this happen,” he added, noting that effective treatments exist for a wide variety of mental disorders.

Due to limited available human and financial resources, community-based primary care facilities must be involved in delivering these services. Moreover, providing effective services in primary care settings would help to reduce the stigma associated with mental disorders and could prevent unnecessary hospitalization and human rights violations of people with mental health problems.

“Such a strategy makes good economic sense,” Mr. Ban said. “Mental disorders impair the ability of children to learn and the ability of adults to function in families, at work and in society at large. It is also a pro-poor strategy. Research shows that mental disorders are overwhelmingly concentrated in lower income groups. Poverty and its associated stresses, which include unemployment, violence, social exclusion and constant insecurity, are closely linked to the onset of mental disorders.”

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