

2021 Economic and Social Committee Humanitarian Affairs Segment

A multisectoral approach towards mental health and psychosocial support in humanitarian settings; needs, achievements and gaps

UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

Tuesday 22 June 10 to 11.30 AM

This is one of the virtual side events to be convened on the margins of the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS), which builds on this year's HAS theme: *“Strengthening humanitarian assistance to face the challenges of 2021 and beyond: mobilizing respect for international humanitarian law, inclusion, gender, innovation and partnerships”*.

Background and objectives of event

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is a cross-cutting area in humanitarian work, with services and activities in multiple sectors such as health, protection, nutrition, education and others. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee released Guidelines on MHPSS in Emergency Settings in 2007 to assist organizations with a set of minimum responses to protect, support and improve mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of people in emergencies.

In the last decade, country-level MHPSS working groups (WGs) were established in many humanitarian emergencies, as a technical cross-sectoral space to coordinate MHPSS service provision, facilitate MHPSS assessments, conduct service mappings, support inter-agency capacity building, develop country-level action plans and advocate for MHPSS services within humanitarian relief efforts. Country level MHPSS WGs receive support and technical guidance from the global IASC Reference Group on MHPSS in Emergency Settings.

In January 2020, there were MHPSS WGs in 22 countries covering clusterized emergencies, refugee and migration contexts. In December 2020, this number had grown to 52, largely as a result of the prioritization of mental health as integral part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as exemplified in the integration of MHPSS throughout the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) for COVID-19.

We will learn through this session how MHPSS Technical Working Group Coordinators from five different humanitarian emergencies are responding to emerging needs in their respective countries and we will hear from international organizations, standby partners and donors on global initiatives to support country work in this area.

Discussion points or guiding questions

- Overview on the ongoing interagency MHPSS programmes in Yemen, Nigeria, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Greece.
- Global initiatives from IASC, Standby Partners, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

Key concrete action points and recommendations/take away messages

Integration of MHPSS in all humanitarian emergencies as an essential component of humanitarian programme cycles.

MHPSS is crosscutting and relevant to different sectors and clusters. IASC MHPSS Reference Group within the IASC is the reference point for technical support in this area of work with members from 60 different humanitarian organizations. A rapid deployment mechanism for MHPSS Coordinators exist and available to support countries in humanitarian situations.

Format of the side event

5 minutes presentations by all Panelists in response to a probing question by Renet van der Waals.
 Overview on Red Cross Resolution on MHPSS and its implementation by Sarah Harrison
 Overview on Dutch Surge Support by Sandra Cats
 Closing Remarks by Fahmy Hanna and Carmen Valle

Chair and moderator

Renet van der Waals, MHPSS Coordinator, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands.
 Fahmy Hanna, WHO, co-Chair IASC MHPSS Reference Group, Switzerland
 Carmen Valle, IFRC, co-Chair IASC MHPSS Reference Group, Denmark

Panel composition

Deborah Magdalena, Maiduguri MHPSS Technical Working Group Coordinator, IOM, Nigeria.
 Ibrahim Abou Khalil, Sanaa MHPSS Technical Working Group Coordinator, WHO, Yemen.
 Maya Tucker, MHPSS Technical Working Group Coordinator, UNFPA, Myanmar
 Matthew Schojan, MHPSS Technical Working Group Coordinator, Johns Hopkins University, Myanmar
 Nikos Gionakis, Athens MHPSS Technical Working Group Coordinator, Babel Migrants' Center, Greece
 Sanem Ozen, UNHCR, Cox's Bazar MHPSS Technical Working Group Coordinator, Bangladesh
 Sarah Harrison, MHPSS Technical Advisor, IFRC Psychosocial Center, Denmark.
 Sandra Cats, Project Manager- MHPSS Surge, Dutch Surge Support, The Netherlands.

Background Material

MHPSS and COVID-19 Resources:
<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-resources-covid-19>
 Joint Call for Action to Scale up MHPSS:
<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/joint-interagency-call-action-mhpss-2020>

Connection details to join the event

https://unfpa.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qmB2Z3w_RtOJhR-PGRujzw

Contact(s)

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