



## 55<sup>TH</sup> COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

“Strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all”

The United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD),  
in partnership with the Missions of Palau and Belgium, the International Association  
of Applied Psychology and the Psychology Coalition at the United Nations  
invites you to a high-level panel discussion:



## Promoting Mental Health and Well-being for Youth: A Strategy for Social Integration and Poverty Eradication

Tuesday, 7 February 2017

1:15 PM - 2:45 PM - Conference Room 12

United Nations Headquarters, New York, NY

Featuring an original play "A Way Up, not Out"  
and original song "That's Just the Way Life Is"

Play and song written by Sophia Angelica, the Rybin Studio of Drama

Performed by Sophia Angelica, Dylan Calderon, Cesar Fernandez all of Rybin Studio

Followed by a panel sharing experiences from the field moderated by Dr. Judy Kuriansky, IAAP

**H.E. Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve**

Permanent Representative of Belgium  
to the United Nations

**Jean-Marie Vianney Bazibuhe**

Founder, Hope and Health Vision  
(Sharing experiences from Burundi and DRC)

**Dr. Wais Aria**

Executive Director and Founder,  
Tabish Organization Psychosocial Support  
(Sharing experiences from Afghanistan)

**Ms. Naomi N'sa**

UN Youth Delegate (Belgium)

**Daniela Bas**

Director, Division of Social Policy and  
Development, UN-DESA

**David Marcotte, Ph.D., SJ**

Founder, The Character Connection Initiative  
(Sharing experiences from inner cities, USA)

**Mr. Frank Kanu**

Executive Director and Founder, Organization  
for Poverty Alleviation and Development  
(Sharing experiences from Europe)

**H.E. Dr. Caleb Otto**

Permanent Representative of Palau to the UN

**Topic:** Promoting Mental Health and Well-being for Youth:  
A Strategy for Social Integration and Poverty Eradication

**FORMAT:** Panel presentation of experiences from Africa (Great Lakes Region), USA (inner cities), Afghanistan, and Europe followed by a moderated discussion with the audience

## **CONCEPT**

Mental-health conditions have a significant impact on the development of over one billion youth and their inclusion in society. World leaders recognized that the promotion of mental health and well-being must be priorities within the global health development agenda and included mental health and well-being in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Goals 3, 8 and 16). It is critical that approaches to addressing this issue include the purposeful promotion of positive mental wellness, provision of evidence-based mental health services as well as the broader societal issues of eradicating stigma and of ensuring inclusion of all, leaving no one behind.

Various psychological, environmental and genetic risk factors contribute to the development of mental health conditions in youth. Environmental risk factors include many aspects of life, including poverty and social exclusion, traumatic events and exposure to conflict and post-conflict experiences. Additionally, both perpetrators and victims of abuse and violence suffer mental health conditions.

As youth are especially at risk, policy-makers must develop sustainable solutions to promote overall mental wellness for this age group. Presently, disparities between need and available services as well as service utilization due to stigma exist in all countries. Better-defined policies and programmes have the potential to improve youth's access to and utilization of a full range of services and to overcome stigma regarding mental health conditions suffered by youth.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What programs/interventions are being done on the ground with/by/for YOUTH that address the intersection of poverty and mental health?
2. What are some promising programmes particularly in low and middle-income countries, specifically in post-conflict settings?
3. In what ways are governments currently working to promote mental wellness and social integration for youth, including policies and programmes? What lessons or good practices can we highlight?