

## **POLICY BRIEF ON MENTAL HEALTH IN ASEAN**

**By ASEAN Task Force on Mental Health**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development (SOMD) in July 2011 has supported the establishment of an ASEAN Mental Health Task Force (AMT). This task force is responsible for the implementation of ASEAN Strategic Framework on Health Development (2010-2015) which has been endorsed by the 10<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM) in July 2010, Singapore. Term of Reference is as attached (**Annex 1**). The AMT has formulated the ASEAN Work Plan on Mental Health (2011-2015) with identified lead countries (**Annex 2**). A workshop on developing ASEAN Policy Advocacy on Mental Health was organized from 4th – 5th June 2013, Bangkok, Thailand and facilitated the development of this policy brief. The brief captures mental health situation and gaps in ASEAN, proposed key strategies, and ways forward for stakeholders including policy makers in addressing mental health issues. The document was tabled at the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Task Force on Mental Health, 4-6 July 2013, in Brunei Darussalam for its review and concurrence

### **B. KEY ISSUES IN MENTAL HEALTH IN ASEAN**

1. Mental disorders are significant contributors to the global burden of diseases, as well as loss of quality of life. They have huge economic and social cost. Untreated mental disorders accounts for 13% of the total global burden of diseases and by the year 2030 depression will be the leading cause of the global burden of disease.
2. Mental Health programme and policy are not in the high priority list in most AMS.
3. Most AMS have a low rate of human resources on mental health per population.
4. The gap between treatment need and their provisions is wide in ASEAN Member States, although effective treatment for mental disorder is not expensive.

### **C. PROPOSED KEY SOLUTIONS/STRATEGIES**

#### **1. Develop and promote effective models for mental health programme**

- Incorporate mental health agenda in all national existing health policies;
- Implement legislation to protect the care, treatment and welfare of people with mental disorders
- Promote depression awareness and combat stigma using public education campaigns

- Integrate mental health and social care services for treatment and rehabilitation

## **2. Human resource management and development**

- Encourage greater involvement of primary and general health care personnel in mental health care.
- Incentivize mental health work and training.
- Improve deployment of mental health professionals to areas in need.

## **3. Financial resources mobilization to support key strategies**

- Ensure adequate mental health care with sufficient financial resources;
- Ensure sufficient budget allocation on capability and capacity building in mental health areas;

## **4. Overcome treatment gaps**

- Standard setting using benchmark among ASEAN Member States for closing treatment gaps
- Involve community groups and service users

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