

WHO calls for investment scale-up in mental health

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For this year's World Mental Health Day (10th Oct), the World Health Organisation (WHO), together with partner organizations, United for Global Mental Health and the World Federation for Mental Health, is calling for a massive scale-up in investment in mental health.

To encourage public action around the world, a World Mental Health Day campaign, *Move for mental health: let's invest* will run in September.

Countries spend on average only 2% of their health budgets on mental health. Despite some increases in recent years, international development assistance for mental health has never exceeded 1% of all development assistance for health.

This is despite the fact that for every US\$ 1 invested in scaled-up treatment for common mental disorders such as depression and anxiety, there is a return of US\$ 5 in improved health and productivity.

The World Mental Health Day campaign will offer opportunities, primarily online given the continuing pandemic, for all of us to do something life-affirming: as individuals, to take concrete actions in support of our own mental health, and to support friends and family who are struggling; as employers, to take steps towards putting in place employee wellness programmes; as governments, to commit to establishing or scaling-up mental health services; and as journalists, to explain what more can and must be done to make mental health care a reality for everyone.

"It is nearly 30 years since the first World Mental Health Day was launched by the World Federation for Mental Health," said Dr Ingrid Daniels, President of the World Federation for Mental Health. "During that time, we have seen an increasing openness to talk about mental health in many countries of the world. But now we must turn words into actions. We need to see concerted efforts being made to build mental health systems that are appropriate and relevant for today's – and tomorrow's - world.

"With so many people lacking access to good quality, appropriate mental health services, investment is needed now more than ever," said Elisha London, Founder and CEO of United for Global Mental Health. "Everyone, everywhere can participate

in this year's campaign. Whether you have struggled with your own mental health, know someone who has been affected, are a mental health expert, or if you simply believe that investing in mental health is the right thing to do, move for mental health, and help make mental health care and support accessible for everyone."