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Item 3 – General Debate
Speaker: Ann Tan

Oral Statement submitted by
IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice
And co-signed by

VIDES Internazionale – International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development

Concerning

**The Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
on the Impact of Mental Health Challenges on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by Young
People**

IIMA and VIDES International welcome the OHCHR study on the impact of mental health challenges on the enjoyment of human rights by young people.¹ Mental health is an integral part of their rights. Its challenges can affect young people's ability to fully enjoy and exercise their human rights.²

Our organizations conducted a global survey that received 1,778 responses across more than 46 countries.³ The findings highlight barriers that continue to prevent many young people from accessing the support they need.⁴

We therefore urge Member States to:

1. Ensure that mental health services are accessible, affordable, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of young people.⁵
2. Adopt laws, policies, and programs that integrate mental health across education, employment, and social protection systems, consistent with a human rights-based approach.⁶
3. Ensure the meaningful and sustained participation of young people in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of measures that affect their mental health and human rights.⁷

Commitments must be translated into law, policy, resources, and effective action to ensure that every young person can access the support they need, live with dignity, and fully enjoy and exercise their human rights. Thank you.

¹ Human Rights Council, *The impact of mental health challenges on the enjoyment of human rights by young people*, A/HRC/63/51 (2026). The study was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 57/30 and presented to the Council at its sixty-third session. The OHCHR study specifically examines the links between young people's mental health and their enjoyment of human rights.

² World Health Organization (WHO), *Human Rights* (1 December 2023), recognizing that everyone has the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and that the right to health is indivisible from other rights, including the rights to education, participation, food, housing, work and information. The OHCHR study likewise notes that unsupported mental health challenges can disrupt education, employment, social connection, participation and access to services.

³ IIMA-VIDES Human Rights Office, *Submission to the OHCHR Call for Inputs on the Impact of Mental Health Challenges on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by Young People* (2026). The survey was conducted from 5–15 February 2026 and received 1,778 replies from more than 46 countries across five continents. Respondents included adolescents aged 14–17, youth aged 18–25, young adults aged 26–35, and educators working with young people.

⁴ IIMA-VIDES, *Submission*, identifying cultural barriers, stigma, lack of adequate and accessible support, limited infrastructure, shortages of trained professionals, and financial and geographical barriers as significant challenges. The OHCHR study independently identifies limited availability of trained professionals and youth-friendly services, financial and geographical barriers, inadequate facilities, and affordability and accessibility gaps.

⁵ Human Rights Council, A/HRC/63/51, paras. 58–60, noting systemic gaps in the availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of mental health care and the need for greater investment in prevention, early intervention and community-based support. The study also identifies accessible, inclusive and youth-friendly services, prevention and early intervention, and stronger professional capacity among the measures called for by young people.

⁶ WHO & OHCHR, *Mental health, human rights and legislation: Guidance and practice* (2023), which calls for mental health systems and legislation to adopt a human-rights-based approach and for access to quality, person-centred, community-based mental health services. The OHCHR study further emphasizes cross-sectoral action and human-rights-based laws and policies addressing youth mental health.

⁷ Human Rights Council, A/HRC/63/51, paras. 86–87, expressly recognizing meaningful youth participation as a cornerstone of a human-rights-based approach and calling for young people's lived experiences, needs and recommendations to be reflected in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation, policies and programmes concerning mental health.