



Ramallah, West Bank, 28 August 2023 - Mr. Minjong Kim, the Country Director of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in Palestine, and Dr. Richard Peeperkorn, Representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), signed a US\$ 6 million cooperation agreement to strengthen the quality and accessibility of mental and psychological health services for Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

According to Ministry of Health (MoH) data, newly registered psychiatric cases in oPt rose by 13% between 2021 and 2022. Regular escalations, ongoing surge in violence and the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to further increase the need for mental and psychological support among adults, adolescents, and children, making it one of the most significant public health challenges in oPt.

“Everyone’s life touches someone with a mental health condition. Yet many Palestinians don’t receive the health care they need because mental and psychological disorders often go under-reported, under-treated, and under-supported. I sincerely thank KOICA for its longstanding partnership and generous support in addressing this invisible crisis. Investment in mental health is an investment in a better life and future for all,” said Dr Peeperkorn.

The three-and-half year project focuses on three paths for enhancing mental and psychological health services in oPt, which include, improving the quality and effectiveness of services at 20 community mental health centres and two psychiatric hospitals, expanding the availability of services by integrating mental health into selected MoH and UNRWA primary health care clinics and general hospitals, and strengthening mental health programmes in schools to support adolescents with risky behaviours. This will be achieved through training and building the capacity of 5,200 MoH and UNRWA health workers and Ministry of Education school staff, delivery of psychotropic drugs to address chronic shortages, introduction of rehabilitation programmes for patients experiencing mental health disorders, and renovation of psychiatric hospitals in Gaza and the West Bank.

“KOICA and WHO have worked together to achieve global health security and overcome the pandemic crises, including COVID-19 and Ebola. For this, the two institutions have implemented ten projects globally based on a solid partnership. I’m pleased to see our partnership continue in Palestine to build a healthier, more resilient society,” said Minjong Kim, KOICA Country Director.

KOICA has supported the health sector in Palestine since 2011. KOICA's programmes focus on providing health services for all, quality education for youth, creating job opportunities, and government capacity building for improving public services.

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