Yemen, July 2, 2020 – A new US$ 3 million contribution from the Government of Japan will give mental health and psychosocial support a fresh boost of support in health facilities across Yemen. The generous and continuous support of the Government of Japan plays a critical role in supporting WHO's humanitarian response in Yemen, with donations amounting to more than US$ 11.5 million between 2015 and 2020.

Over 5 years of ongoing conflict have taken their toll on the mental health of the Yemeni people. Hundreds of thousands have been impacted by psychosocial stressors caused by war, poverty, illness and family separation, yet few have access to basic services and employment opportunities as the country goes through hardship.

COVID-19 comes as a new emergency on top of an emergency. People with existing mental health conditions and psychosocial problems are worsened by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In populations already heavily affected by years of war such as Yemen, issues of service access and continuity for people with developing or existing mental health conditions are also now a major concern.

**Mental health care services in Yemen**

In Yemen, the mental health care system suffers from a shortage in funding, low commitment of decision-makers in advocating for such services, scarcity of mental health professionals, compounded by pervasive social stigma associated with mental health illness and the limited interest from humanitarian actors in strengthening mental health and psychosocial support systems.

Health authorities have limited capacities and resources as there are only 45 psychiatrists working in the country (36 in Sana’a and 9 psychiatrists in Aden (one psychiatrist to every 700 000 individuals). Also, the vast majority of people requiring treatment, including psychotropic drugs, have to pay for treatment.

This new injection of support will include strengthening mental health governance and human resources development. Furthermore, it will allow WHO to ensure that capacity-building, support and supervision are addressed in coordination with health authorities.
WHO response to the mental health crisis in Yemen

In 2019, WHO supported more than 14 000 mental health consultations, providing with its partners more than 90 000 psychosocial support sessions.

176 health facilities provided mental health and psychosocial support to those in need, including 47 hospitals, 63 health centres and 60 health units.

Note to editors

The 2020 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan requires US$ 2.41 billion to assist more than 24.3 million Yemenis, which accounts for 80% of the entire population with humanitarian aid and protection. In 2020, WHO requires US$ 234.4 million to continue delivering its life-saving programmes. To date, the funding gap at WHO remains above 90%.

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