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**UN Human Rights Council**

**Intersessional Consultation on Mental Health and HR, 15th November 2021**

**Segment 1 – Public policy reform**

Delivered by Mr. Tomer Bar Lavi

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Israel thanks the panelists for their contributions, and welcomes the opportunity to engage in this discussion.

“There is no health without mental health.” And we have to make sure to put it into practice.

For over half a decade, Israel has recognized mental health as a component of general health. Seeking to eliminate stigma, and improve the quality of and access to treatment, Israel transferred responsibility for mental health services to the health insurance funds, thereby integrating mental health into the general medical services system.

A human rights approach has guided Israel’s mental health policy. This includes legislation that eliminates the requirement for a court-appointed guardian to those affected by mental illness – except as a last resort. Following Israel’s commitments under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, this shift provides such individuals with added autonomy and agency, allowing them to take responsibility over their own lives.

Israel’s intensive community-based treatment programs for those suffering from acute mental health crises offer a welcome alternative to psychiatric hospitalization. Additionally, as part of our rehabilitation policy, reintegration into society promotes independent thinking and self-worth among affected individuals – a clear human rights benefit for this population.

Yet, while these advances continue to bring good news, we still face the challenge of ensuring that target populations exercise their rights and are aware of the services at their disposal, when needed.

On that note, we would like to ask the panel – what can governments do to help those citizens in need of mental health services realize their rights and take advantage of the assistance provided by national healthcare systems?

Thank you, Chair.