



INTERCOUNTRY GROUP MEETING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME

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COUNTRY REPORT  
MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME  
IN  
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

By

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Dear Chairman of the Meeting, Dr Kanaan, Dr Sartorius, Dr Baasher and colleagues from different countries,

I want to express my thanks by the name of my country Syria for inviting my fellow and myself to attend the Intercountry Group Meeting on the Development of the Mental Health Programme.

When we are going to read our report on the mental health services in our country, we must mention that our government supports every effort to develop these services.

We have now in Syria two mental hospitals, one in Damascus and the other in Aleppo associated with one out-patient clinic in Aleppo General Hospital (Watani 4) which takes responsibility of the mental health services of the total population which reach 8 million.

In detail, Damascus Hospital was established in 1921 and it has 900 beds. Aleppo Hospital was established in 1953 and has 400 beds. The number of people attending out-patient clinic in Aleppo General Hospital is about 2000 p. a year in 1982.

The number of psychiatrists in the Country is about 30 and distributed as follows :

- 17 in Damascus
- 8 in Aleppo and 5 in other cities of the Country

Thus the ratio is about (260,000) for every psychiatrist. We have no clinic for social workers, no clinic for psychologist in the mental health services and we have no psychiatric nursing working in mental hospital. So we compensate this deficiency by the general nursing who reaches to 75. These figures expose the position of mental health services, however, the Ministry for Social Affairs takes a role in the care of the

mentally retarded.

On that ground, the present mental health services are looking for the future by putting a programme for integration of mental health care as follows :

1. Cooperation of Ministry of Health with the Ministry of Social Affairs and other local authorities.
2. Extension of mental health services in the local government through opening of mental health department in the different general hospitals and local mental hospitals and centres all over the country.
3. Involving the community in the responsibility of mental health care, and promotion of mental health awareness through the radio, T.V. and direct contact with community leaders
4. Establish training programme for the G.P.D. and general nurses to compensate the deficiency of the mental health staff and to develop primary health care.

We are looking forward to starting this programme and we hope to increase the cooperation between our country and the WHO and continuation of the Intercountry Meeting which is very useful to improve our experience in this field.