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**UN Human Rights Council**  
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**ID with the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of  
the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**

Delivered by Mr. Yoel Mester,  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN in Geneva

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Mr. Vice-President,

We would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on Health for his report, which highlights the importance of facilitating the continued participation of mental patients as functioning members of their own communities.

It is precisely this thinking that prompted the Israeli mental health system to embark on a far-reaching reform, which went into effect in July 2015. The main driver of the reform has been the inclusion of mental health services as an integral part of the general "Health Services Basket" that every citizen of Israel is entitled to by law. This means that access to these services has significantly improved, with dozens of new clinics opening around the country, more treatment alternatives offered and waiting periods shortened.

This improved access that people suffering from mental difficulties enjoy as a result of the reform, has already had a positive impact on the way they are perceived in the general public, freeing them from unfair stigmatization .

The Israeli experience supports many of the findings of the esteemed rapporteur, about the importance of mainstreaming mental health, and the need to render it more inclusive and accessible. It fits the paradigm of a developed country that needs to reform its already well-established mental health sector, so as to make it more community-based.

But there are many other countries which are not as well-positioned to make that change since their existing mental health services are insufficient. And so, we would like to ask the Special Rapporteur how he suggests that these countries bridge the gap?

I thank you Mr. Vice-President.