You are cordially invited to attend the following Side Session at the occasion of the 3rd Global Forum on Human Resources for Health in Recife, Brazil:

**CLOSING THE MENTAL HEALTH GAP:**
Strengthening Human Resources for Health to Advance Universal Health Coverage

**Wednesday, November 13th (14:00-15:30)**
Mario Melo Room 5, Atlante Plaza Hotel
Recife Pernambuco, Recife, Brazil

One in four people globally suffers from mental health problems, according to the World Health Organization, and this proportion may be even higher among populations exposed to conflict and crisis. Yet despite the fact that mental health problems affect general health, productivity and achievement of the MDGs, there is a critical shortage of qualified health workers to address mental health needs and a vast disparity in the distribution of mental health professionals. In low-income countries, for example, there are only 0.05 psychiatrists and 0.16 psychiatric nurses per 100,000 people, compared to 200 times more in high-income countries. In line with the vision of the Global Health Workforce Alliance, the purpose of this Side Session is to shed light on the need for people with mental health problems to have access to skilled, motivated and supported health workers within a robust health system.

The panel will address components of successful approaches to mental health integration and how building the capacity of health workers can help reduce the significant gap in mental health service provision. Given the adoption of the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 at this year’s World Health Assembly, this discussion is particularly timely. The Action Plan could change the direction of mental health in countries around the world in the coming years. It also provides a platform for ensuring that mental health is considered during the post-2015 development agenda.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE SIDE SESSION:**

- Highlight the gap between existing mental health care needs and current health capacity
- Illustrate the important role of mental health in achieving the MDGs and in framing the post-2015 development agenda
- Understand WHO and IASC guidelines on the integration of mental health into primary health care
- Illustrate successful, innovative examples of mental health integration within general health care and capacity building of health workers from several countries (e.g., Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon)

**MODERATOR:**

Annie Toro, International Medical Corps, Senior Advisor, Global Health Policy & Advocacy

**PANELISTS:**

Dr. Peter Hughes, Royal College of Psychiatrists
Dr. Margaret Mungherera, President of the World Medical Association
Dr. Inka Weissbecker, International Medical Corps, Global Mental Health and Psychosocial Advisor

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