



## STIAS ROUNDTABLE FOLLOW-UP MEETING ON MENTAL HEALTH IN AFRICA

17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014

### Aim

To build consensus on practical ways forward in achieving improved access to mental health and closing the treatment gap in Africa, including a focus on improving mental health care for women and children who are at risk of violence.

### Objectives Day 1

1. Develop a working research agenda with priorities for VAWC and mental health in Africa
2. Identify priority themes and broad questions/strategies within each theme area
3. Explore opportunities for integration and partnership within the VAWC field
4. Develop an action plan for VAWC that integrates research and implementation

### Objectives Day 2

5. Understand the current global processes and core documents for scaling up services, and how African strategies can fit into this
6. Make recommendations building political will and capacity to implement priorities at country level in these action plans and strategies
7. Take the next steps towards creating a knowledge and communication hub for mental health in Africa

### Summary

The meeting will bring together a core group of experts from Africa, and elsewhere, to share the latest evidence and perspectives to inform implementation of progressive mental health reform. Sub-Saharan Africa has a mental health treatment gap of between 80 and 90%, but momentum to address this is growing in many countries. This gap is particularly evident in the lack of effective support for women and children who have experienced violence. We will explore ways to improve access to mental health services in Africa, and improve the quality of life of people with mental conditions, including by addressing discrimination and human rights abuse.

This meeting is a follow up from a Roundtable, held on 24/25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2014, which had the theme *Mental health challenges in sub-Saharan Africa: Moving to implementation*. The Roundtable theme was linked to a broader research theme on "Health in Transition" which STIAS will promote over the next five years with the support of the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation.

The first day of the meeting will cover the priority theme, identified in the first Roundtable, of mental health and Violence against Women and Children.

On the second day the experts from across Africa will use the forum to examine ways in which sub-Saharan Africa's mental health challenges can be met in the next 20-30 years. The focus will be on reviewing recent advances in evidence-based policy guidelines and recommendations, including the global WHO Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan and the Africa Mental Health Strategy, and looking at its practical implementation.

In so doing we wish to ensure that any future planning around prevention and treatment of mental health conditions, capitalises on this increased attention to mental health, and benefits from a common and coordinated approach.

In addition, we will consider improving communication between relevant practitioners and researcher in countries in Africa, as well as the international global mental health community. As the evidence grows about successful reform of mental health services, it is important that this information is available to those working in this field in Africa, and specific experiences of successful work in Africa is shared. The idea of an 'Africa communication and information hub' that arose from the first roundtable will therefore be discussed in more detail with a view to deciding on the next concrete steps.

The ultimate purpose of the meeting is to foster better communication among researchers, policy-makers and practitioners, including NGO's, in ways that may be beneficial to the relevant parties and to society at large.

Julian Eaton

Steering Committee Chair

31 October 2014