

# BasicNeeds-Ghana

## Headquarters

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## **Prioritise mental health as a universal human right**

As Ghana joins in the global commemoration of the 2023 World Mental Health Day under the theme **"Mental health is a universal human right,"** the Alliance for Mental Health and Development (Mental Health Alliance) calls on Government and all other stakeholders to recognise mental health as a human right. Mental health is essential to the overall wellbeing and ability of a person to live a fulfilling life, yet this fundamental human right eludes many.

The United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, and the Mental Health Act 2012 Act 846 guarantee the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, devoid of discrimination and exclusion. Despite these guarantees, many people worldwide still lack access to the necessary mental health care. In Ghana, only 1 out of every 10 people in need of mental health care actually receive professional treatment for their conditions. Unemployment rates among those with mental health conditions remain unacceptably high. People with mental health conditions continue to face exclusion from decision-making processes, endure economic hardship, experience stigma and discrimination, have their personal freedoms denied, and suffer from physical abuse. Six (6) out of every 10 of women living at the alleged witches' camps suffer some level of depression and often subjected to violent physical abuse including murder.

The Mental Health Alliance is glad that finally, the Mental Health Review Tribunal and Regional Visiting Committees have been established as required by law, indicating that our calls have been heeded to. The Parliament of Ghana also passed the Amended Criminal and Offences Bill 2022 to prohibit witchcraft accusation in Ghana. A lot remain to be done since the Mental Health Review Tribunal is only functional in three regions, while the Regional Visiting Committees have been operationalised in only 5 regions, The Amended Criminal and Offences Bill 2022 is yet to receive Presidential assent.

On the occasion of this year's World Mental Health Day celebration, the Mental Health Alliance calls on the Government to address the following as matter of priority:

1. Ensure that the Mental Health Review Tribunal is fully operational and that Regional Visiting Committees are established in all 16 regions of Ghana, rather than the existing 5 regions.
2. Resource the Mental Health Review Tribunal and Regional Visiting Committees to enable them to protect the mental health of Ghanaians as a human right.
3. Include mental health in the NHIS benefit package and go beyond the rhetoric.
4. Promote mental health in the Universal Health Coverage strategy of Ghana.

Furthermore, the Mental Health Alliance calls on The President to assent the Amended Criminal Offences Bill 2022.

In observance of this year's World Mental Health Day, the Mental Health Alliance extends its warmest wishes to all Ghanaians and encourages everyone to prioritise their mental well-being. Do not hesitate to seek early treatment for your mental health when needed!

## REGISTRATION DETAILS

BasicNeeds-Ghana Registered No: CG031202019  
Department of Social Welfare D.S.D./1480  
TIN: C0009458409

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

**HQ:** Plot No. 143 Industrial. Area Ext. BLK III Revised, opposite UDS Central Administration, Tamale  
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## **Note to the Editor**

The Alliance for Mental Health and Development (Mental Health Alliance) is a national network of over three hundred CSOs, NGOs, and CBOs engaged in mental health advocacy in Ghana. It has eight regional chapters in the Upper East, Upper West, Northern (Northern, Savannah and North-East), Brong Ahafo (Bono, Bono East and Ahafo), Greater Accra, Ashanti, Volta, Central, and Eastern Region.

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