

## Accelerating action on global drowning prevention

**Draft decision proposed by Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, European Union and its 27 Member States, Georgia, India, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Monaco, Montenegro, Nepal, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Paraguay, Peru, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and United Arab Emirates**

The Executive Board, having considered the report on social determinants of health,<sup>1</sup>

Decided to recommend to the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

The Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly,

(PP1) Recalling resolution WHA64.27 (2011), which recognized drowning as a leading global cause of injury-related child deaths,<sup>2</sup> requiring multisectoral approaches to prevention through the implementation of evidence-based interventions;

(PP2) Recalling also resolution WHA74.16 (2021), which recognized the need to strengthen efforts on addressing the social, economic, gender related and environmental determinants of health,<sup>3</sup> including the need to address the consequence of the adverse impact of climate change, natural disasters and extreme weather events;

(PP3) Recalling also the adoption of resolution 75/273 (2021) by the United Nations General Assembly on global drowning prevention,<sup>4</sup> inviting WHO to assist Member States in their drowning prevention efforts and to coordinate actions within the United Nations system among relevant United Nations entities;

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<sup>1</sup> Document EB152/22.

<sup>2</sup> WHA64.27 (2011). [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA64/A64\\_R27-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA64/A64_R27-en.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> WHA74.16 (2021). [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA74/A74\\_R16-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA74/A74_R16-en.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution on *Global drowning prevention (75/273)*. Available via: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3925005?ln=en>.

(PP4) Recalling also the publication by the WHO Secretariat of the *Global report on drowning*,<sup>1</sup> as well as subsequent guidance<sup>2</sup> showing that drowning is a serious and neglected public health issue which can be prevented with feasible, low cost, effective and scalable interventions;

(PP5) Deeply concerned that drowning has been the cause of over 2.5 million preventable deaths in the past decade, but has been largely unrecognized relative to its impact and that peak drowning rates are among children;

(PP6) Recognizing the interlinkages between drowning and development, and noting that over 90% of deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries;<sup>3</sup>

(PP7) Noting with concern that the official global estimate of 235 000 deaths per annum<sup>4</sup> excludes drownings attributable to flood-related climatic events and water transport incidents, resulting in a significant underrepresentation of drowning deaths;

(PP8) Underlining that drowning has connections with the social determinants of health, including through the increased vulnerabilities to the effects of climate change, in particular flooding events, which are predicted to increase in severity and frequency, unsafe modes of water transport and inherently riskier livelihoods dependent on exposure to water;

(PP9) Further underlining that in all countries other connections with the social determinants of health include drowning being a high risk in poor rural communities with close proximity to water bodies, where poverty prevents implementation of drowning prevention interventions, livelihood needs may lead to children being unsupervised, and where long-term economic and social impacts of drowning exacerbate and prolong socioeconomic marginalization;

(PP10) Emphasizing that drowning prevention requires the urgent development of an effective coordinated response among relevant stakeholders in this regard,

(OP)1. WELCOMES the invitation of the United Nations General Assembly<sup>3</sup> for WHO to assist Member States, upon their request, in their drowning prevention efforts; and further accepts for WHO to coordinate actions within the United Nations system among relevant United Nations entities; and to facilitate the observance of World Drowning Prevention Day<sup>5</sup> on 25 July each year;

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<sup>1</sup> WHO (2014). *Global report on drowning: preventing a leading killer*. Available online via: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/644433/retrieve>.

<sup>2</sup> WHO (2017). *Preventing drowning: an implementation guide*. Available online via: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1083494/retrieve> and WHO (2021). *Preventing drowning: practical guidance for the provision of day-care, basic swimming and water safety skills, and safe rescue and resuscitation training*. Available online via: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1415756/retrieve>.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution on *Global drowning prevention (75/273)*. Available via: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3925005?ln=en>.

<sup>4</sup> WHO Global Health Estimates, 2019. Available online at: <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/observances/drowning-prevention-day>.

(OP)2. URGES Member States:

- (1) to assess the national situation concerning the burden of drowning, ensuring targeted efforts to address national priorities including through the appointment of a national drowning prevention focal point, as appropriate, and assuring that resources available are commensurate with the extent of the problem;
- (2) to develop and implement national multisectoral drowning prevention programming, with a focus on community, including emergency response planning and linkage with community first aid response and emergency care systems as appropriate, in line with WHO recommended interventions, particularly in countries with a high burden of drowning;
- (3) to ensure that policy planning and implementation across sectors such as health, education, environment, climate adaptation planning, rural economic development, fisheries, water transport and disaster risk reduction, particularly policies which address the underlying drivers of increased flood risk, are undertaken in a manner that reduces drowning risks;
- (4) to promote drowning prevention through community engagement, public awareness and behavioural change campaigns;
- (5) to promote capacity-building and support international cooperation by sharing lessons learned, experiences and best practices, within and among regions;

(OP)3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to encourage research on the context and risk factors for drowning, facilitate adaptation of effective drowning prevention and safe rescue and resuscitation measures that can be applied in local communities, and evaluate the effectiveness of drowning prevention programmes;
- (2) to prepare a global status report on drowning prevention by the end of 2024 to guide future targeted actions;
- (3) to provide Member States, upon request, with technical knowledge and support to implement and evaluate public health, urban and environmental policies and programmes for drowning prevention and mitigation of its consequences;
- (4) to foster capacity-building, and facilitate knowledge exchange among Member States and relevant stakeholders, promoting dissemination and uptake of evidence-based guidance for drowning prevention;
- (5) to establish a global alliance for drowning prevention with organizations of the United Nations system, international development partners and nongovernmental organizations;
- (6) to report on progress in the implementation of this resolution to the Health Assembly in 2025, to include reporting on the global status report on drowning prevention and reflect on contributions to the agenda of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025; and subsequently in 2029, to include reporting on achievements of the global alliance and intersections with broader agendas including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

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