

WHA 76

Agenda Item 16.3 - Social Determinants of Health

Ireland

Chair,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the EU and speaks on Item 16.3.

Ireland welcomes WHO's Operational Framework for Monitoring Social Determinants of Health Equity.

Chair,

Ireland is pleased to co-sponsor WHA Resolution, **"Accelerating Action on Global Drowning Prevention"**. My thanks to our colleagues from Bangladesh with whom we worked closely on this resolution, and to the 72 co-sponsors from all regions for their support.

Ireland recalls the Executive Board's recommendation that this resolution be adopted by this World Health Assembly.

Chair,

Over two and half million lives have been lost due to drowning in the last decade. Tackling this preventable killer is urgent and essential. Drowning is not just an accident; it also stems from inequity.

The statistics speak for themselves: rates of drowning are greatest amongst poorer and marginalised populations; over 90% of drowning deaths take place in low- and middle-income countries, with peak drowning rates occurring among children.

As with many other preventable deaths, the social determinants of health such as socio-economic disadvantage and regional isolation can and do increase the risk of drowning.

In Ireland, an island nation, drowning remains a significant public health issue, and one we are committed to addressing effectively.

Drowning can be prevented through the implementation of evidence-based, low-cost and scalable interventions, as promoted by the WHO.

For example, Ireland's efforts focus on changing skills, attitudes and behaviours as framed by the Government's ten-year National Drowning Prevention Strategy. Child education is a top priority. In 2021 Ireland developed its first water safety education resource for Early Learning Centres.

Ireland, in partnership with Bangladesh, requests that the WHO lead the coordination of global drowning prevention efforts among United Nations agencies, international development partners, and non-governmental organisations, and that it provide ongoing technical knowledge and support to Member States to address this issue.

Working together, we can reduce the number and burden of drownings globally.

Chair

In addition, Ireland calls for the adoption of the resolutions co-sponsored by the EU on the Health of Indigenous People and on the Impact of Chemicals, Waste and Pollution on Human Health, and thanks those delegations that have led the work on these texts.

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