

Cross-sectoral approach to child drowning prevention and the coordination role of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs in child drowning prevention

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Drowning is the leading cause of injury related mortality. It is responsible for about 50% of injury related mortality for children and adolescents aged 0–19. In 2008 alone, 3523 children and adolescents aged 0–19 died of drowning, equivalent to more than nine children and adolescents per day.

Preventing child drowning requires strong participation of all relevant sectors. Therefore, since 2002, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) has been taking the lead role in coordinating child drowning interventions, particularly in the areas of communication, policy development and implementation. Specifically, messages on child drowning prevention have been conveyed to general public, especially parents, care givers and children in various formats. Furthermore, in 2009, for the first time, nine relevant ministries and mass organizations signed an inter-sectoral plan on child drowning prevention. In addition, child drowning prevention has been addressed under MOLISA's plan of action.

In the next five years, child drowning will continue to be one of the priorities for child injury prevention and therefore, it will be part of the national programme for child injury prevention with budget allocated by the Government at different levels. Moreover, strategic communication and education of general public, particularly parents, child care takers and children on child drowning prevention (particularly reduction of environmental risks, child supervision, teaching children to safely swim) will be strengthened.

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