

# The UNGA Resolution on Global Drowning Prevention: pathway to progress and the way forward



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# Session Aims

- Tell the story and outcome of **successful international efforts by UN Member States to secure change for the issue of drowning, globally**

*UN General Assembly Resolution on Global drowning Prevention (A/RES/73/275)*

- Offer an **overview of the UNGA Resolution and key elements, including:**
  - **Voluntary actions**
  - **New UN designated global observance day for drowning prevention (25 July)**
- **Share insight of international progress since adoption** in April 2021
- **Share insight into 2021/22 World Drowning Prevention Day international activity**
- **An invitation and to you** as a nation, as a new coordinating mechanism (Flyte), Govt representatives, organizations, individuals

# Drowning, a global problem, experienced unequally

- 236,000 deaths annually (WHO, GHE 2019)

- All nations affected

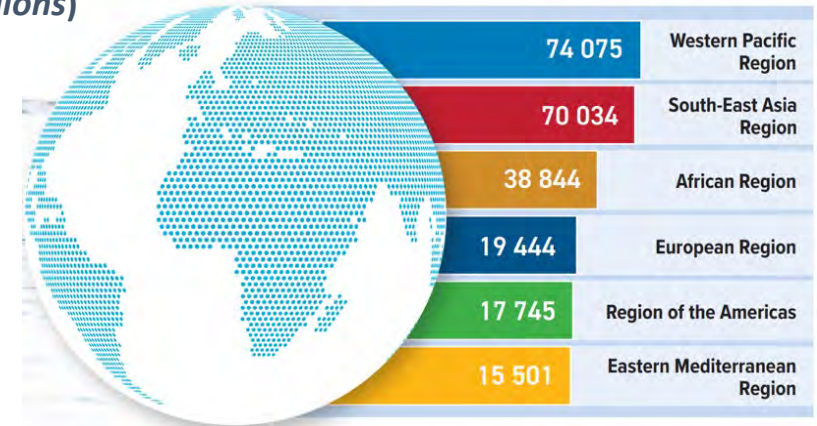
BUT

- 90% of burden in LICs/MICs
- Among the 10 leading causes of death for 1-24 yrs
- Affects all age groups, but globally, especially young people
- Males at greatest risk

## 2.5 million lives lost in last 10 years

- Progress being made (guidance, action, investment), but slow, unequal
- Investment in drowning prevention relevant to enabling progress on SDGs (currently off target)
- No Member States, or UN Agency, mandated/supported to take action, at scale

Global Drowning Burden: regional breakdown (WHO Regions)



Data Source: WHO Global Health Estimates, 2019





# The Challenge: How to create change?

- **Historically, securing progress and change on global issues has originated through UN Member State agreement**  
(health, sustainable development, climate change, security)
- **UN Resolutions can be a pathway**
  - UN General Assembly, New York
  - World Health Assembly, Geneva
- **Every nation of the world represented diplomatically via national “Mission” to UN**
- **Resolutions not legally binding; recommended action for Member States; a form of global consensus**  
(an anchor, foundation for action)
- **Can act as a framework for accountability**  
(globally, nationally, regionally)



# UN Resolution: Ambitious 3 year journey - What & how?

- \* Focused on UN Member State agreement for action via UN General Assembly, in New York

*(connection to achieving UN SDGs)*

- \* Building & sustaining a coalition of supportive & pathfinder / champion countries

*(Group of Friends on Drowning Prevention)*

- \* Clear, sustained, evidence-based advocacy & influencing approach

*(clear narrative/rationale)*

- \* Insider advocacy tactics

*(building & sustaining trust, partnership, collective, ambition)*

- \* Effort supported by a dedicated Secretariat (capacity)

*(RNLI International team, pro-bono)*

- \* UN agencies practically engaged & supportive throughout *(WHO & UNICEF)*



NorwayUN 🇳🇴 @NorwayUN · 40m  
Every other minute, a child drowns. Children aged under 5 face the greatest risk. Norway is proudly a member of the new Group of Friends on Drowning Prevention.

If you are @UN HQ 🌐 the exhibition in the Visitor Lobby 📍 #EndDrowning #SDG3 #HLPF2018 @GLMay5



Thai Mission to UN and 9 others



# Delivery Schedule: UNGA Resolution Pathway 2018-2021

New York Schedule	Action
January 2018	“Open” Member State Group briefing on issue and ambition, and first bilaterals
March 2018	“Group of Friends” formally launched (World Water Day - 22 March), with initial champions
March 2018 – August 2019	Bilaterals ( <b>102</b> ); technical briefing events to all Member States ( <b>7</b> ), photo exhibition ( <b>1</b> ), side events during UN NYC calendar (SDG High-level Political Forum, CSW)
November 2019	Secured Co-Sponsors ( <b>Bangladesh &amp; Ireland</b> ), agreed Resolution pathway (UNGA Resumed Session: Sustainable Development Agenda)
December 2019 – Jan 2020	X 3 Regional Briefings (European Union, ASEAN, Alliance of Small Island States - AOSIS)
6 March 2020	Final Technical Briefing to all MS, announcement of Co-Sponsors and Chairs for Negotiations by IRE & BD Ambassadors, sharing of draft Resolution text (in all UN languages), and announcement of negotiations to start 23 March 2019  <b>COVID-19:</b> UNHQ closes (13 March), New York lock-down (23 March)
<b>April 2020 – Jan 2021</b>	<b>COVID-19 Pause (11 months)</b>
February – April 2021	Re-ignition meeting with Member States, update of draft Resolution text (new WHO GHE Estimates), formal negotiation process / rounds (virtual), agreement and formal adoption of Resolution

## Resolution Negotiations

**Chairs/Co-facilitators:** Permanent Mission of Bangladesh & Permanent Mission of Ireland, to the United Nations, New York

**Technical Secretariat:** WHO (New York), with shared/support function from UNICEF HQ (New York) & RNLI (Group of Friends on Drowning Prevention Secretariat)

**Over 2.5 years, 130 countries engaged**



# 2021: A historic, significant year for drowning prevention globally

- **28 April 2021:** First collective recognition of global scale, impact, and preventability of drowning by UN Member States
- UNGA Resolution on Global Drowning Prevention (**A/RES/75/273**)
- **Adopted by unanimous consensus** (all 193 Member States)
- Recognition of issue relevance in achieving progress on international commitments (**sustainable development goals, public health, climate change, disaster risk reduction**)
- Sets-out range of voluntary actions (for implementation by MS)
- Calls for increased, coordinated UN agency action
- Designates a new UN Observance day:  
“World Drowning Prevention Day” (25 July, annually)



UN passes **HISTORIC RESOLUTION** for drowning prevention



**81**  
countries sponsor  
**RESOLUTION**



Resolution calls  
for  
**MULTISECTORAL**  
response



Asks WHO to  
coordinate  
**DROWNING  
PREVENTION**  
within UN system

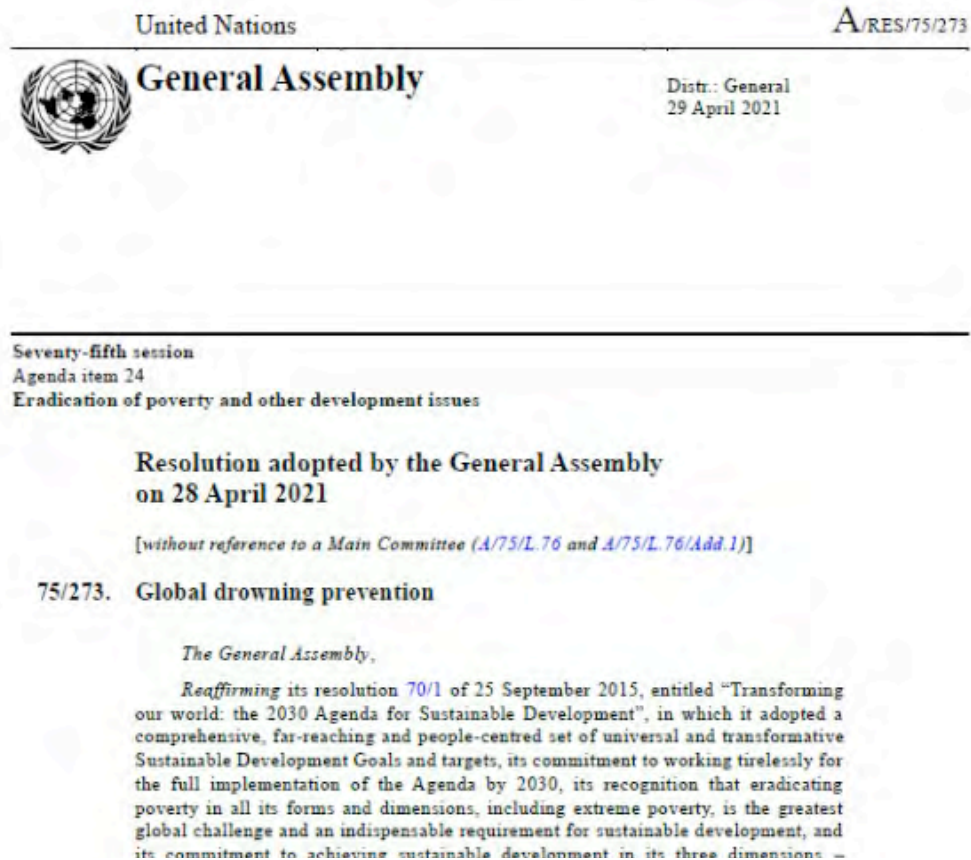


Declares July 25  
**WORLD  
DROWNING  
PREVENTION**  
Day



# UNGA Resolution on Global Drowning Prevention

## A framework for action



### 10 actions for governments to take, voluntarily, based on WHO recommendations, including:

- Appoint a national focal point or coordinating mechanism for drowning prevention
- Develop a national drowning prevention plan
- Develop drowning prevention programming in line with WHO's guidance/recommendations  
<https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1083494/retrieve>
- Promote drowning prevention public awareness and behaviour-change campaigns
- Ensure effective enactment & enforcement of water safety legislation
- Encourage the inclusion of drowning mortality data into national estimates (CRVS) / register drowning deaths
- Consider water safety, swimming, first aid lessons as part of school curricula

Text available @ <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/75/273> (5 UN languages)  
& via UN digital library <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3925005?ln=en>



# World Drowning Prevention Day (25 July 2022)

## Official UN Observance Day

- Dual intention: **reflection and action**

- ☐ **Remembrance of lives lost**  
(commemoration)

- ☐ **Collective positive action**  
(global, national, local)

- \* For scaled amplification of issue, its impact, its preventability

- \* Use of a global day/moment within national drowning prevention annual activity

- \* Global public awareness



**World  
Drowning  
Prevention  
Day 25 July**

**Anyone can drown,  
no one should.**

**#DrowningPrevention #WDPD**

# Why July 25<sup>th</sup>?



NEWS / ASIA

## India's monsoon death toll swells as rain lashes east

31 JUL 2021

India's monsoon death toll rises above 230 as experts warn climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of annual monsoon storms between June and September.





GRANADA WATER SAFETY | MONDAY 26 JULY 2021, 10:50AM

# Four boys among six deaths in Scottish waters in 24 hours

by STEPHEN WILKIE

Police are urging people to "exercise extreme caution" when swimming in lochs and rivers after six people - including four young boys - drowned in a series of tragic incidents.

The devastating toll was described as "hard to comprehend" by police, while First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said it was "heartbreaking".

It was reported last night that Edina Ojahowa, 29, and her son Rana Harris Ali, nine, died along with a family friend, Mohammad Asim Raza, 41, when they got into difficulty near Pulpit Rock in Loch Lomond, south of Ardlui, on Saturday evening. A seven-year-old boy is also fighting for his life.

That tragedy was the fourth such incident in Scotland's waters in just over 24 hours.

A Scottish Chief Constable Mark Williams, of Police Scotland, said the tragedies had "highlighted that

CROSSWORDS - Pages 2 & 40 - WEATHER - Page 41 - ANNOUNCEMENTS - Page 36 - LETTERS - Pages 24 & 25 - TV & RADIO - Pages 38 & 39

## Education calls grow after week of tragedies in England's waters

At least 17 drown as swimming advocates argue for a new approach rather than warnings and bans



# I TRIED SO HARD BUT I JUST COULDN'T SAVE THEM

LOSS: Waris Ali with Edina Ojahowa and Rana Maria Ali. Inset: Muhammad Asim Riaz

By Richard Elias

A FATHER has given a heartbreaking account of how he tried in vain to save his wife, nine-year-old son and a family friend from drowning in Loch Lomond.

Rescuers described the weekend toll of six deaths in water in Scotland as the "worst in

TURN TO PAGE 4

Grief-stricken dad tells of horror moment he lost wife, son and best friend in loch tragedy

## Warnings issued after at least 31 water deaths amid UK heatwave

HEATWAVE | WEATHER | Monday 26 July 2021, 5:12pm

## Safety plea to heatwave swimmers after eight water deaths in North West

GRANADA | WATER SAFETY | Monday 26 July 2021, 10:50am





# Marking the achievement

The Sydney Morning Herald

World North America Water safety

## Countries urged to take action to prevent drowning

By Edith Lederer

April 29, 2021 — 6:51pm

Save Share A A A

**New York:** Drowning is preventable using simple, low-cost interventions and every government should make it a priority so the 2.5 million drowning deaths in the past decade will not be repeated.

That is why all 193 members of the UN General Assembly have resolved to encourage every country to take urgent action to prevent drownings.

They called on nations to consider introducing water safety, swimming and first aid lessons as part of school curricula and appoint "a national focal point for drowning prevention", develop countrywide prevention programs, and enact and enforce water safety laws.



Some 2.5 million people died from drowning in the past decade.

The resolution, co-sponsored by Bangladesh and Ireland and adopted by consensus, is the first to focus on drowning. It establishes July 25 as "World Drowning Prevention Day".



**UK water safety** @NWSFweb · Apr 29

The UN has officially adopted its first ever resolution on drowning prevention. This historic moment - a coordinated UN approach will help to reduce drowning fatalities across the world. We are dedicated to helping the cause. Full info: [undocs.org/A/75/L.76](https://undocs.org/A/75/L.76)



**Ireland at UN** @irishmissionun · Apr 30  
A highlight of the week: the adoption of the 1<sup>st</sup> UN resolution on #drowningprevention!

Ireland & Bangladesh led the initiative to harness international action to prevent hundreds of thousands of preventable deaths

Check out @EdithLedererAP's story  
[usnews.com/news/us/article...](https://usnews.com/news/us/article...)



Bangladesh@UN and 2 others

## UN adopts historic first Resolution on Global Drowning Prevention

Lifeboats News Release

Thursday 29 April 2021

The Resolution sets out urgent actions on drowning prevention for all countries and UN agencies



**The Royal Family** @RoyalFamily · 21h

The Queen's conversation with @rlsscw comes as the United Nations has adopted a historic Resolution on Drowning Prevention, representing the formal acknowledgement of the issue as an international problem.

Watch the full video here: [bit.ly/3faACnK](https://bit.ly/3faACnK)



## Organisational Statements:

- UK National Water Safety Forum
- RLS Australia
- Lifesaving Canada
- International Lifesaving Federation (ILS)
- RLSS Commonwealth
- Water Safety Ireland
- Royal National Lifeboat Institution
- NSRI, South Africa
- Bloomberg Philanthropies
- The George Institute for Global Health (TGI)

# Progress since adoption: voluntary actions

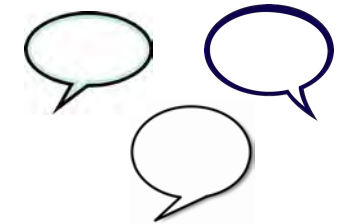
## Selection of examples

### National policy, strategies, plans

- Restarted paused national drowning prevention strategy / plan process  
Bangladesh, USA
- Development of first national drowning prevention plan  
Uganda, Maldives, Zanzibar, Guyana, India
- Review of existing national commitments/strategy/plans against UNGA Resolution action areas (gaps, opportunity for progress)  
UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, many Commonwealth nations

### Coordination mechanisms and networks for drowning prevention

- Strengthening and advancing existing : UK (*National Water Safety Forum; Water Safety Scotland*), USA
- Building new: Tanzania, India





# Activity and progress

## Collective Political and Civil Society Dialogue

- Increased / initiated engagement & dialogue with Govt Ministers; with and across Ministries, with Parliamentarians

Through:

- High-level meetings
- Cross-ministry roundtables
- Parliamentary petitions,
- Parliamentary debates and events

Ireland, India, Kenya, Tanzania, UK (Westminster), Scotland and Wales



Petition

### Increase curriculum content about water safety as part of swimming lessons

As a country we see many water-related fatalities every year. We see many more call outs to water related incidents. Throughout lockdown year our coastguards were tasked to almost double the call outs than in the previous year. Our children NEED to learn about Cold water shock & rip currents.

[More details](#)

[Sign this petition](#)

**107,940** signatures

Research Briefing

### E-petition debate on throwline stations around open bodies of water

Published Thursday, 20 January, 2022

[Debate Pack](#) [Communities](#)

[Nikki Sutherland](#) [Elizabeth Rough](#)

On Monday 24 January there will be a Westminster Hall debate on e-petition 575967 relating to throwline stations around open bodies of water. The debate will be opened by Nick Fletcher MP on behalf of the Petitions Committee.

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itvNEWS Top stories Your Area Topics Weather

## Water safety to be debated in Parliament after successful campaign by Lancashire mum of teen victim Dylan Ramsay

GRANADA | EDUCATION | DYLAN RAMSAY | WATER SAFETY | Saturday 3 July 2021, 11:36am



# Activity and progress

Investment, \$ € policy development, strategic commitment, research and evidence:

Multilaterals / UN family



**UNICEF:** Child Injury included in UNICEF 2022-2025 strategy; inclusion in annual indicators; technical guidance for staff, (future: country investment)



**WHO:** Staff capacity, growing programme of work, publication of drowning intervention guidance/good practice (May 2022), intervention economics (emerging)



**Food & Agriculture Organization:** Fisher safety dialogue (sustainable small-scale fisheries guidelines), International Year of Artisanal Fishers (2022)



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
**ARTISANAL FISHERIES  
AND AQUACULTURE**  
2022



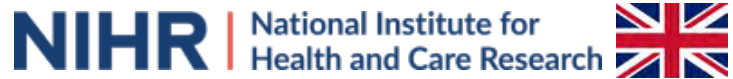
**International Maritime Organization:** Model domestic ferry regulations (April 2022)



# Activity and progress

Investment \$  € (programming, policy development, research and evidence):

## Global Research (calls & investment)



### UK: National Institute for Health & Care Research

Unintentional injury research in LMICS, through HIC/LMIC academic partnership

**£1.6 million GBP** (3 yr programme, drowning in under-2's Bangladesh) (ODA funds)



### USA: National Institutes of Health

National and international research grants <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-HD-21-048.html>

## New Government and Philanthropic Investment

Examples in range of geographies (Asia, North America, Europe)

Value: from \$100K's to several millions

**Govt of Bangladesh: £32 million (announced June 2022; implementation starting now)**



# Government of Bangladesh New Investment:

## *Integrated Community Based Centre for Childcare, Protection and Swim-Safe facilities Project (2022-2024)*



**Led by Ministry of Women & Children's Affairs (MoWCA)**

**1). Establish & operate 8,000 integrated childcare centres for children under-5 yrs  
(200,000 children)**

*\*Childcare and supervision support during critical hrs for child safety in rural Bangladesh (9am-2pm)*



**2). Establish and introduce 1,600 swimming training facilities for children 6-10 yrs  
(360,000 children)**

*\*Children develop swim skills and water safety awareness, for self-protection from drowning*





# Progress: World Drowning Prevention Day (25 July)



WHO coordinates / supports  
Demonstration of this role, 2021/22 via:

- **Core messaging, infographics & data, social media material, WDPD animation**
- **Guidance** (activity & practical ideas):
  - global, regional, local level
  - using the colour blue
- **Information materials** for local communities, civil society, government, UN family
  - \* Templates, evergreen strap-line, hashtags
- Hosting of **global webinar** (28/29 July)  
(learn, reflect, inspire, celebrate)

World  
Drowning  
Prevention  
Day 25 July

Anyone can drown,  
no one should.

WHO Campaign Webpage:



<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-drowning-prevention-day/2021>



WHO Issue Animation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-dbF1QBdN0&t=56s>

\*Lighting buildings / monuments





# Global Response: World Drowning Prevention Day (2021-22)





# Global Response: World Drowning Prevention Day (2021-22)



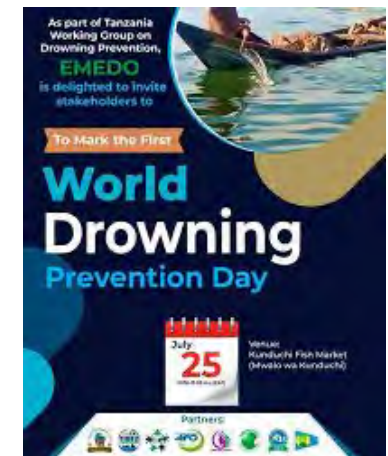
25 JULI WERELDDAG TER VOORKOMING VAN VERDRINKING



World Drowning Prevention Day 2021



Global, national, local reflections on World Drowning Prevention Day 2021  
Webinar: Wednesday 28 July  
New York 06:30 / Geneva 12:30 / Bangkok 17:30 / New Delhi 18:00 / Sydney 20:30  
Rio de Janeiro 7:30h





# World Drowning Prevention Day 2022

Retained core themes, straplines, core resources and global webinar, BUT introduced a new call to action .....  
“Do one thing to prevent drowning” - to be retained for next few years



**World Drowning Prevention Day 2022**  
*Do One Thing – to prevent drowning*

**INDIVIDUALS** are encouraged to:

- Share water safety advice
- Sign up for swimming and water safety lessons
- Support local drowning prevention charities and groups

**GROUPS** are encouraged to:

- Launch water safety campaigns
- Commit to developing or delivering new drowning prevention programmes
- Host public information events (workshops, seminars)
- Share stories of your work

**GOVERNMENTS** are encouraged to:

- Announce new drowning prevention policies, strategies, legislation, or investment
- Announce or commit to support drowning prevention programming domestically or internationally
- Convene multi-sectoral roundtables or parliamentary discussion

WHO Press Release: <https://www.who.int/news/item/25-07-2022-who-calls-on-global-community-to--do-one-thing--to-save-lives-on-world-drowning-prevention-day>

# Looking ahead: 2023 onwards

**UN New York:** maintaining awareness and visibility of issue in UN New York fora, through “Group of Friends” mechanism and RNLI International Advocacy



(March)



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(July)



(Sept)

**UN Geneva:**



- \* Growing issue awareness / visibility in global health epicentre via outreach events (WHO & MS partners),
- \* Developing network of support amongst Geneva Missions, INGO community, UN agencies (WHO and RNLI, and champions)
- \* Visibility amongst Health Ministers @ World Health Assembly (May)



**WDPD:** Ongoing WHO support (international expert group), growing annual activity, and budget

# Looking ahead: 2023 onwards

## Monitoring and reporting progress

### UNGA Resolution

- no formal provision (cost implications)
- Informal approach via *Group of Friends on Secretariat* (RNLI) & WHO HQ
- RNLI working with partners (inc. WHO) to consider modalities for a future “progress” barometer

### WDPD

- Informal reporting by practioners to WHO (to Technical Leads)
- RNLI working with partners (inc. WHO) to consider modalities for a future “progress” barometer, and publication approaches



## **REQUEST:**

**Capture, monitor, and share your stories of progress and challenge**

**Your experience (positive and the challenges) is VITAL for “sector wide learning”**

# Invitation, Ask and Offer

## World Drowning Prevention Day 2023

- Put July 25<sup>th</sup> into your diary NOW... start planning



Anyone can drown,  
no one should.

- Consider the themes: ***“Do one thing to prevent drowning”*** AND ***“Going Blue”***
- Be an **ambassador for Norway**. Globally, regionally, and locally
- **Monitor, report, share your efforts** - including with WHO HQ, Geneva

**Make a commitment/share ideas before you leave this conference?**

## My Offer

- **To share information and guidance** for WDPD 2023 as available
- **Listen, exchange & explore ideas with you. Offer support / mentoring**
- **Discuss, offer and share presentations with your institutions / senior leaders** about this opportunity
- **Amplify Norway’s ambition, plans, leadership, achievements in national, regional, and international / UN fora**

# World Drowning Prevention Day 2022 – A Celebration



Link to WHO compiled film celebrating a snapshot of World Drowning Prevention Day 2022 activity - [https://youtu.be/9\\_Xb-uYgv0M](https://youtu.be/9_Xb-uYgv0M)



An underwater photograph with a strong blue and teal color palette. The scene is filled with numerous small, clear bubbles of varying sizes, some of which are in sharp focus while others are blurred in the background. A bright, out-of-focus light source, likely the sun, is visible in the upper left corner, creating a soft glow and illuminating the water. The overall composition is serene and evokes a sense of depth and tranquility.

**Together we can save lives, and change futures**