



WORLD CONFERENCE ON DROWNING PREVENTION VIETNAM 10-13 MAY 2011

Building a global platform to reduce drowning

MEDIA RELEASE

50 COUNTRIES COMMIT TO CHILD DROWNING PREVENTION

DANANG, TUESDAY: Over 400 experts from 50 countries have joined together to tackle the epidemic of child drowning in Asia where it is believed that approximately 300,000 children drown every year.

Research shows drowning as the leading cause of death for children aged 1–4 in many Asian countries and a significant cause of death for children aged 5–17.

The 400 plus delegates have come to present and share valuable research at the World Conference on Drowning Prevention which was officially opened in Da Nang, Vietnam today.

The conference is committed to building a global platform to reduce drowning with a specific focus on low and middle income countries where drowning occurs mostly through everyday activities and not through recreation as is common in high income countries.

The delegates represent NGOs from the development sector, life saving organisations, and government departments.

International Life Saving Federation (ILS) President, Dr Steve Beerman, opened the conference saying: “Without the support and engagement of our collaborative partners in government, health, child survival and social affairs, the new drowning prevention initiatives would not be possible in Vietnam or other nations.”

The conference has attracted the support of international dignitaries including Her Excellency, Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Mr Doan Mau Diep, Deputy Minister for the Government of Vietnam’s Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA), both of whom spoke at the opening ceremony.

Other dignitaries included the Hon Chief Justice Terrence Higgins AO, President of the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, presenters of the conference; Dr Phung Tan Viet, Vice-Chairman of the Da Nang People’s Committee; Ms Lotta Sylwander, the United Nations Vietnam representative; and Douglas ‘Pete’ Peterson, President of The Alliance of Safe Children (TASC) and former US Ambassador to Vietnam.

MoLISA’s Dr Nguyen Trong An presented at the first plenary session of the conference discussing the cross-sectoral approach and the role of MoLISA in drowning prevention in Vietnam.

Dr Nguyen stated that drowning is responsible for approximately 50 per cent of injury related mortality for children and adolescents aged 0–19 in Vietnam and said that since 2009, MoLISA has taken a lead role in drowning interventions and will continue to make drowning a priority of child injury prevention over the coming years.



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The conference has been organised by ILS members Royal Life Saving Society – Australia and The Alliance for Safe Children (TASC).

The World Conference on Drowning Prevention will run from 10–13 May 2011.

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