



The Royal Life Saving Society,

- Commits to the effective implementation of the principles, actions and partnerships outlined in the UN General Assembly Resolution on Global Drowning Prevention (A/75/273) adopted in April 2021
- Commits to the effective implementation of the recommended principles, actions and partnerships outlined in the draft World Health Assembly Resolution – “*Accelerating Action on Global Drowning Prevention*” (EB152/CONF./2 30 January 2023). (Update once decision is made at the 76th World Health Assembly, May 2023) (9)
- Embraces the shared values and aspirations outlined in the Commonwealth Charter
- Recognises the importance of young people, and the needs of small and vulnerable states as we play our role within the Commonwealth
- Aligns to global frameworks for sustainable development, environmental protection and equitable access to health, education, food, and shelter.
- Champions drowning prevention as an effective measure [to reduce] and prevent child deaths and protect investments in child development.

Noting that,

- The World Health Organization estimates that 2.5 million people lost their lives to drowning over the past decade, (1) 90% occurring in low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs). (2)
- In 2017 over 110,000 people died from drowning in Commonwealth countries.
- More than one- third (37%) of global drowning occurred in Commonwealth countries.
- Three Commonwealth countries - India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh account for 78% of all Commonwealth drowning deaths. (3)
- Drowning is a leading cause of child deaths (1-4 years) and is a top ten leading cause of death for children 1-24 years in every region globally. (6)
- Drowning is a social equity issue that disproportionately affects children and adolescents, especially in rural areas.
- Half of all drowning deaths in Commonwealth countries occur among children and adolescents (0-19 years), 26% occurring in children in their first five years of life. (6)
- Two thirds of drowning deaths in Commonwealth countries are amongst males.
- Drowning has a disproportionate impact on poor and marginalised people, who are vulnerable to changing environmental and social risks. (4)
- Drowning had largely escaped global attention, until April 2021, when the UN General Assembly passed its historic first Resolution on Global Drowning Prevention, co-sponsored by 81 UN member states, 30 of them commonwealth member countries. (5)
- The highest rates of drowning occur in African and many Small Island Commonwealth Member Nations (6).

Royal Life Saving Society recognises that action is needed, specifically that,

- Communities play a frontline role in preventing drowning and investment is needed to build community resilience, capacity and ability to reduce drowning through leadership training, skill development and system enhancement.
- RLSS plays a facilitating role in Commonwealth member nation community action, policy/regulation, and research.
- Investment is urgently needed to:
 - a. raise high-level awareness of the preventability of drowning
 - b. mobilise communities to reduce drowning impacts in the Commonwealth.
 - c. implement effective and targeted capacity-building for drowning prevention.
 - d. promote and implement proven drowning prevention interventions. (6)
 - e. foster scientific, technological, and societal innovation aimed at forging new knowledge and effective approaches to reducing drowning
 - f. build lifesaving skills especially in youth and young adults
 - g. develop and deploy lifesaving equipment and resources to protect communities
- Commonwealth countries are encouraged to mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources aimed at reducing drowning.

Royal Life Saving Society encourages all members and partners to:

- Create forums for national, sub-national and community focus on drowning prevention, lifesaving, and water safety
- Strengthen civil society, through the formation (and strengthening) of lifesaving groups and organisations focused on community level action for drowning prevention
- Deliver community informed drowning prevention/water safety programs that align with WHO interventions, including those that promote supervision of children, swim skills, training of young people in safe rescue, resuscitation, and lifeguarding, and promoting boating safety
- Introduce basic swimming, lifesaving, water safety, and first aid lessons in school curricula
- Engage with other civil society groups and government to advocate for and create policies, laws and regulations aimed at preventing drowning, and promoting safe recreational use of waterways
- Collect, monitor, and analyse data to identify drowning problems and inform prevention efforts
- Create, implement, and evaluate public awareness campaigns focused on drowning prevention knowledge and water safety behaviour change.
- Collaborate, participate and partner in local approaches to reducing the impacts of (water-related) disasters
- Engage, inspire, and empower youth through leadership development and lifesaving sport development to in the humanitarian effort, skills and that demonstrates humanity, equality, and destiny. (7)
- Observe World Drowning Prevention Day (July 25th annually) in an appropriate manner in accordance with national priorities, through education, knowledge sharing and other activities to raise awareness of the importance of drowning prevention and the need for urgent coordinated multisectoral action to reduce drowning.

The RLSS engages with others who share the mission, and are committed to:

- Respectful sharing and networking
- Acknowledging historical injustices and learning to promote inclusive equitable engagement
- Empowering youth and promoting civil rights to improve sustainable states/communities
- Supporting small states, island states and states/communities with greatest need.



Fig. 1. Interventions and Strategies to prevent drowning, WHO, 2014(2)

For specific target audiences:

The RLSS, its members and partners commit to progressing actions and partnerships for drowning prevention with the Commonwealth, Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation.

We share aspirations for the advancement of drowning prevention on the agenda of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM).

We see value in a Commonwealth Declaration for Drowning Prevention that recognises links between action on this preventable cause of mortality and injury to advancing progress on achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, building community resilience to the risk and impacts climate change, and aligns action on drowning prevention by the Commonwealth to global collaborative efforts of World Health Organization and the United Nations.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, 15 March 2023

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