

## CONSENSUS STATEMENT OF THE 5<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SWIMMING POOL & SPA

The 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference Swimming Pool and SPA brought together 195 participants from 22 countries. The conference was organized in 9 sessions covering chemical and microbial risk, occupational safety and health promotion, monitoring, surveillance and prevention, water treatment and pool management, harmonized guidelines and regulations.

The participants reaffirmed the growing importance of pools and SPAs to human health and sustainable development. At the same time they recognize that the expansion of pool and SPA based recreation is accompanied by an increase in health risks that should be managed on all relevant levels and by the best possible methods. The health risk management needs to be governed by the interests of public health and based on relevant scientific evidences and agreed best practice approaches.

Aquatic recreation is an important tool in maintaining health at a time when many countries are experiencing an obesity epidemic, and contributing healthy years of life to elderly people at a time of rapid demographic transition.

Aquatic recreation is a key to the rapid growth of the global tourism industry, an essential component of many national sustainable development plans. Participants noted with concern the lack of an international regulatory framework for safe pool and SPAs, and incomplete national regulations in many countries. Participants also recognized the need to pay more attention to specific issues of occupational health and safety for aquatic recreation workers, and to address the training needs of pool and SPA operators. Failure to address these problems will lead to significant but entirely avoidable costs to national public health systems or insurance based systems.

Participants acknowledged the importance of recreational waters also within a travel and tourism contest, stressing that in view of interregional epidemiological differences, global health risk management of recreational waters will be required.

Important discussions focused on new material and technologies for building swimming pools and similar environments. At the same time participants underlined the need for advanced monitoring systems that could lead to a real-time analysis of relevant parameters strictly connected to health, safety and quality in pools. Innovative methods, also in the microbiological field, can be particularly useful in self-monitoring recreational water environments. Improved surveillance procedures can have a vital impact on users and operators health, reducing illness and injuries.

The conference welcomed the action by the World health Organization work on revision of the 2006 guidelines on Safe Recreational Waters and the steps already taken in this direction. It invites WHO to take the outcome of the conference into account during the revision, and to consider its established scientific forum as a source of expertise.

