

# The Bone and Joint Decade 2000–2010

## An update

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The increasing effect of bone and joint disorders on patients and health care systems led to a Consensus Meeting in Sweden in April 1998 and ended in an agreement to launch a Bone and Joint Decade 2000–2010. The meeting focused on joint diseases, low back pain, trauma, osteoporosis and crippling diseases in children.

One of the aims of the Bone and Joint Decade was to create national networks in January 2000. Today, 80 countries have established national coordinators. In 39 countries, impressive national action networks with participants from various professional and patients' musculoskeletal organizations are now creating their own national goals and agendas. 20 governments have endorsed the Decade: the first being Hungary in November 1999 and the latest Italy in January 2000. The Decade is supported by 750 organizations, journals and institutions worldwide.

The Decade has now been reported in most professional major journals in the musculoskeletal field and public awareness is growing.

The Steering Committee, with 9 members representing various diseases and patients' organizations, met on 28 May 1999 with Secretary General Kofi Annan, who was informed and asked for support, and this was further discussed in July. An endorsement was received on 30 November 1999 in a statement agreed on with WHO, approved by Director General Gro Harlem Brundtland and signed by the Secretary General.

In November 1999, 55 network participants from 29 countries met in Zurich and worked out a more detailed strategy and goals.

### **“Strategy and goals of the Bone and Joint Decade**

#### **A. Raise Awareness of the Growing Burden of Musculo-Skeletal Disorders on Society**

*Strategy:*

- to show the current prevalence, incidence and burden of musculo-skeletal disorders and how they translate in terms of financial costs.*
- to collate and structure existing data on an international basis and relate to financial costs by the Bone and Joint Monitor Project.*
- to show the predicted increase in musculo-skeletal disorders by the year 2010 and relate to financial costs.*
- to show the difference the Bone and Joint Decade could make either by incidence or cost*
- to communicate the results of the Monitor Project and the Bone and Joint Decade to national decision makers in order to achieve the BJD target*
- to inform and encourage the society to reduce the burden of musculo-skeletal disorders by shifting indirect to direct health care costs*

*Specific Goal:*

*One hundred countries to actively participate in the Bone and Joint Decade by 2002.*

#### **B. Promote Prevention of Musculo-Skeletal Disorders and Empower Patients through Education Campaigns**

*Strategy:*

- to design public awareness / education campaigns on prevention of musculo-skeletal disorders and a sense of responsibility to look after oneself.*
- Communicate the campaign within the National Action Networks for support.*
- to encourage National Action Networks to meet*

with national departments such as Health Authorities to seek their endorsement on the campaign and to seek possible assistance with campaign information materials.  
 to facilitate national and international consensus on strategies for prevention of the major musculo-skeletal disorders  
 to produce guidelines for patients on each condition, to enable them to participate actively in their own care and to manage their disability more effectively, (as using questions to ask their doctor and sample answers they should expect to receive).

*Specific Goal:*

*Establish in all participating countries public and patient education programs.*

**C. Advance Research in Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Musculo-Skeletal Disorders**

*Strategy:*

*to have research funding reflecting the burden of musculo-skeletal disorders in the society.  
 Inform and work together with National Research Councils and Funding Bodies*

*Specific Goal:*

*Triple existing research funding during the Decade period.*

**D. Improve Diagnosis and Treatment of Musculo-Skeletal Disorders**

*Strategy:*

*to have education on musculo-skeletal disorders reflecting the burden in the society*

*Specific Goal:*

*Influence the Medical Schools training program to include at least 6 months of training on musculo-skeletal disorders with the aim to improve the GP diagnostic skills and accurate referrals and institute similar programs for other medical groups  
 to base prevention diagnosis and treatment of musculo-skeletal disorders on evidence-based guidelines  
 to develop and set in practice drugs with disease modulating capacities and less side effects  
 to develop and set in practice more biological treatment modalities  
 to develop and set in practice safer surgical procedures*

*Specific Goals:*

*25% reduction of expected increase in osteoporotic fractures  
 25% reduction of expected increase in joint destruction in joint diseases  
 25% reduction of expected increase in severely injured people  
 25% reduction of expected increase in indirect health cost for spinal disorders.”*

At the start of the new millennium, 13 January 2000, the Decade was officially launched in Geneva with an educational meeting and a dinner attended by 300 participants from all major musculoskeletal organizations and all continents in the world. The occasion ended with a 2-day scientific workshop opened by the Director General of WHO, Gro Harlem Brundtland, with participants from all musculoskeletal fields ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)).

WHO tries to include a complete range of methods in these programs, which comprise professional training, patient and family education, as well as community and patients' participation. The target is to improve early detection, effective treatment and rehabilitation. WHO's goal is to influence governments to include these programs in their health services and their primary health care systems, and place musculoskeletal problems high on their agendas.

The global burden of musculoskeletal conditions was reviewed with a summary of existing data on day 1, and agreement was reached on commonly used indicators on day 2. This will make it possible to estimate and monitor the health needs of musculoskeletal conditions and measure changes over the 10-year period. The workshop in Geneva will feature in editorials during the first half of 2000, and in a technical publication in the second half. The data will be used in the Global Burden of Disease publication that will appear in 2001.

For those interested in following the progress of the Bone and Joint Decade, please refer to [www.bonejointdecade.org](http://www.bonejointdecade.org).

The Bone and Joint Decade 2000–2010 for prevention and treatment of musculo-skeletal disorders. Lund, Sweden, April 17–18, 1998. Acta Orthop Scand (Suppl 281) 1998; 69.

Guest Editorial. The Bone and Joint Decade 2000–2010. Acta Orthop Scand 1998; 69: 219–20.

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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO LAUNCH THE BONE AND JOINT DECADE 2000 - 2010  
FOR THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT  
OF MUSCULO-SKELETAL DISORDERS

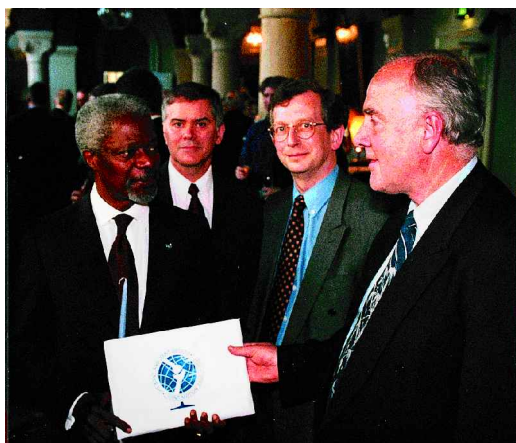
Musculo-skeletal disorders are the most common causes of severe long-term pain and physical disability, affecting hundreds of millions of people around the world. Joint diseases, back pain, osteoporosis and limb trauma due to accidents and armed conflict have an enormous impact on the individual, on society and on health care and social systems. With the increasing number of older people and the changes in lifestyle occurring throughout the world, this trend will increase dramatically over the next decade and beyond.

There are effective ways to prevent or treat these disabling conditions. But we must act on them now. The United Nations, the World Health Organization, national and international organizations for people with musculo-skeletal disorders and health care professionals are working globally with the Bone and Joint Decade Movement to improve the quality of life for people with musculo-skeletal conditions. They work to raise awareness of the growing burden of musculo-skeletal disorders on society; to focus attention on developing countries; to empower patients to participate in their own care; to promote cost-effective prevention and management; and to advance understanding of musculo-skeletal disorders through research to improve prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

On behalf of the United Nations, allow me to welcome and support this collaborative initiative, the Bone and Joint Decade 2000-2010.



- Kofi A. Annan



The United Nations supports the Bone and Joint Decade initiative in a communication released from the Spokes Office at the UN Headquarters.

Kofi Annan, Secretary General, who endorsed the Bone and Joint Decade on the 30th of November 1999 together with Professor Anthony Woolf, UK, Professor Nicolas Walsh, USA and Professor Lars Lidgren, Sweden.



Professor Joseph D. Croft, USA (joint diseases), Mr Brett Bivans, World Bank, Switzerland (trauma and global road safety partnership), Professor Jan Dequeker, Belgium (osteoporosis), Professor Stuart L Weinstein, USA (childhood conditions), and Professor Harold Vasey, Switzerland (spinal disorders) at the Bone and Joint Decade Launch on the 13th of January, 2000, in Geneva.