



## **The Bone and Joint Decade • 2000 – 2010** *For prevention and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders*

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Nations Unite to Counter Rising Epidemic of Bone and Joint Disorders** *Nations Unite for October 12-20<sup>th</sup> Bone and Joint Decade Action Week*

[LUND, SWEDEN] October 9, 2002 - More than 400 million people around the world today live with crippling, chronic pain of joint diseases, osteoporosis, spine disorders and musculoskeletal trauma --- an all too common, costly and isolating experience. In recognition of this daunting fact, 44 national governments and 750 organisations that have endorsed the *Bone and Joint Decade 2000-2010* have united to conduct awareness and education activities during Bone and Joint Decade Action Week, October 12-20<sup>th</sup>.

Endorsed by the United Nations, World Health Organisation, the Vatican, 44 governments and over 750 organisations, the Bone and Joint Decade (BJD) is a major global initiative to increase awareness, education, and promote research to combat musculoskeletal disorders, recognised as *the* chronic care challenge of the new century. Arthritis and musculoskeletal diseases are already one of the leading causes of disability, workplace absence and hospitalisations. Over the next twenty years, demographic trends will continue to intensify the impact bone and joint disorders have on society; by 2020, health officials believe the number affected could increase by fifty percent – to 570 million people worldwide.

To combat this rising trend, 41 countries gathered in Rio de Janeiro to signed a Global Declaration to raise awareness, empower patients, promote cost-effective prevention and treatment, advance understanding through research, promulgate education and training of health professionals, and to facilitate cooperation amongst government, non-government, academic, corporate and media institutions.

“Action Week” activities include national press conferences, government-endorsed public and health professional seminars, national awards for accessible designs, online patient forums, education materials, free bone mineral density testing, radio and TV interviews, bone ultrasounds, osteoporosis risk assessments, children’s scavenger hunts, calcium-rich lunches, hotlines to address bone and joint questions, early childhood nutrition, and information kits for hospitals and homes for the aged.

“Action Week” begins with World Arthritis Day on October 12. For example, to inaugurate China’s official support for the Bone and Joint Decade on World Arthritis Day, the Vice Premier and Minister of Health in China will officiate at a special scientific symposium of experts from various specialties on joint diseases.

On World Spine Day October 16, for example, Japan will host lectures given by more than 50 doctors on back pain and rehabilitation for the disabled.

A Bone and Joint Decade target area is musculoskeletal trauma where problems with road traffic accidents are increasing at an epidemic rate and are rising fastest in developing countries. On World Trauma Day, October 17, it will announced that WHO has dedicated World Health Day on April 7, 2004 to global road safety. This will be followed by national initiatives in all participating countries.

A World Osteoporosis Day, October 20, message is “Invest in Your Bones: Prevent the First Fracture.” Why emphasize prevention for the first fracture? The risk of a “cascade” effect resulting in future fractures is high --- one out of five women, suffering a first vertebral fracture will fracture again within one year. High hospital and treatment costs make it more cost effective for government health care services and insurance companies to prevent the first fracture than to treat fractures.

“These initiatives will significantly decrease the rates of death and disability from bone and joint disorders,” said Prof. Lars Lidgren, M.D., chairman of BJD’s International Steering Committee.

THE BONE AND JOINT DECADE is an independent global non-profit organisation whose mission is to improve the health-related quality of life for people affected by bone and joint disorders worldwide. It is the umbrella organization through which National Action Networks, professional medical societies, patient advocacy groups, governments, industry and researchers *partner* to effect change by: (1) Raising awareness of the growing burden of musculoskeletal disorders on society; (2) Empowering patients to participate in their own care; (3) Promoting cost-effective prevention and treatment; and (4) Advancing understanding of musculoskeletal disorders through research to improve prevention and treatment. For the listing of countries, organisations and activities, visit [www.boneandjointdecade.org](http://www.boneandjointdecade.org).

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