

# Prevention of Blindness and Deafness News



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This electronic newsletter is a new quarterly initiative from the Programme of the Prevention of Blindness and Deafness, World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, and the regional offices. Its purpose is to keep you and our other partners updated on what we are doing to reduce and eventually eliminating avoidable visual and hearing impairment.

We hope you find the newsletter interesting and informative. Please feedback any comments to the relevant members of staff. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter in the future, please contact us at [WHOPBD@who.int](mailto:WHOPBD@who.int).

*Dr Nick Banatvala, Acting Coordinator, Prevention of Blindness and Deafness*



To receive the newsletter by e-mail

To receive the electronic version of every new issue of the WHO PBD Newsletter, please send a message to [WHOPBD@who.int](mailto:WHOPBD@who.int) containing the following message text: "subscribe NL."



## NEWS FROM WHO/HQ

*Geneva, 14 September 2010:* First Global Stakeholder Conference held to share progress on the *Action Plan for the Prevention of Avoidable Blindness and Visual Impairment*. Fifty one participants from 19 member states, international partners and WHO were there. The Action Plan was reviewed and discussed. Member States and International Partners and WHO together reaffirmed their commitment to working together to deliver the Action Plan. ([mariottis@who.int](mailto:mariottis@who.int))

*Geneva, 12 October 2010:* Joint WHO-International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness Council of Members meeting to progress on VISION 2020. The key outcome was agreement that a Taskforce evaluates the impact of VISION2020 and makes recommendations for VISION 2020's future direction. ([kocuri@who.int](mailto:kocuri@who.int))

*Rome, 14-17 November 2010:* A global consultation on age-related macular degeneration (AMD) held with WHO, Johns Hopkins University, Wilmer Eye Institute and IAPB-Italia Onlus as partners. The meeting reviewed current knowledge, best practice and methods to control AMD in different health care settings. The psychological impact of AMD (especially depression) was highlighted. A final report will be available later in the year. ([minchiottis@who.int](mailto:minchiottis@who.int))

*Geneva, 22 January 2011:* Progress report, *onchocerciasis control through ivermectin distribution* submitted to WHO's Executive Board ([http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/EB128/B128\\_35Add1-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB128/B128_35Add1-en.pdf)). The report was well received and the revised version will now be shared with the World Health Assembly in May. ([uketyt@who.int](mailto:uketyt@who.int))

*Geneva, January 2011:* WHO releases new global estimates of visual impairment. WHO estimates that the number of people with visual impairment (presenting vision) is 285 million (65% of whom are aged over 50 years). Of these, 246 million have low vision (63% over 50) and 39 million are estimated to be blind (82% over 50). For further details see <http://www.who.int/blindness/en/> ([pascolinid@who.int](mailto:pascolinid@who.int))

## NEWS FROM AFRO

*Ethiopia, 28 October - 3 November 2010.* An evaluation of trichiasis surgery was carried out with the LIONS Clubs International Foundation. LIONS supports the surgical components of the WHO approved SAFE strategy and their support is crucial in Ethiopia's campaign to eliminate blindness from trachoma. The evaluation took place during the MALTRA week (treatment of malaria and trachoma) during which millions of people receive drugs for trachoma and impregnated bednets. The review concluded that excellent progress is being made in controlling trachoma in Ethiopia. ([mariottis@who.int](mailto:mariottis@who.int))



*Abuja, 7-9 December 2010:* 16th session of the Joint Action Forum (JAF) of the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC). Ministers from 15 APOC and former Onchocerciasis Control Programme attended along with donors, multilateral, NGO, research and private sector partners. Donors reaffirmed their commitment to onchocerciasis control through APOC with new funds announced. The Forum approved a US\$36.1 million budget for 2012-2013. The 37th session of the NGO Coordination Group and the 32nd session of the Technical Consultative Committee will take place 2 - 4 March 2011 and 7-11 March 2011 respectively in Ouagadougou, Burkina-Faso. ([uketyt@who.int](mailto:uketyt@who.int))

## **NEWS FROM EMRO** ([CPB@emro.who.int](mailto:CPB@emro.who.int))

*Afghanistan:* A plan has been developed to strengthen the existing eye care-training programme. As part of this, a new training programme is being run at Kabul Noor Eye Hospital with the support of the College of Ophthalmology and Allied Vision Sciences (COAVS), Pakistan. To reduce the backlog of cataract cases, Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health in conjunction with WHO and Patients Helping Fund Society, Kuwait launched 10 eye camps across the country. The plan is to carry out 2000 cataract surgeries by the end of the year.

*United Arab Emirates, 14 - 16 February 2010:* A regional workshop on integrating and strengthening primary eye care was held.

*Egypt:* To strengthen eye health in rural underserved population, WHO, the MoH and the National Eye Centre conducted a rapid assessment of avoidable blindness (RAAB) in the five governorates with training key staff.

*Libya:* WHO in collaboration with the General People's Committee for Health and environment and Tripoli Eye Hospital conducted a country-wide RAAB.

*Somalia:* A training workshop for local eye doctors was run by WHO, the Manhal Charity Organization, the MoH and Egypt's Arab Medical Union, Treatment of cataract, glaucoma and squint surgeries were all areas covered.

*Sudan:* WHO in collaboration with the MoH conducted a RAAB in four states. Kassala State reported the highest prevalence of blindness, with 13% of those over 50 blind. A district eye care planning workshop was organized by the MoH in South Sudan in collaboration with WHO, IABP, CBM, ORBIS, Sightsavers and the International Centre for Eye Health. The result of the workshop was a five-year eye care roadmap for South Sudan.

*Yemen:* WHO in collaboration with the Minister of Public Health and Population conducted RAAB in Amran and Lahj governates. Overall, prevalence of blindness among those over 50 years was 9%.



## NEWS FROM PAHO/AMRO ([silvajuan@paho.org](mailto:silvajuan@paho.org))

WHO attended the Caribbean VISION 2020 National Committees meeting with MoH and NGO representatives from Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti and St Lucia. The meetings reviewed achievements, barriers and lessons learned from implementing national eye care programs. It was agreed that more Caribbean countries would be invited to future review meetings. National VISION 2020 workshops will take place in 2011 in Guyana and Jamaica with visits to Haiti and St Lucia.

WHO participated in the NGO Collaborating Group Meeting with CBM, ORBIS, ICEE, Caribbean Optometrists Association, Help Age, IAPB, CCB and Sightsavers. The meeting reviewed implementation of the Caribbean regional plan and national progress. The next annual meeting will take place between date - date 2011.

*Jamaica:* WHO joins a Jamaican MoH workshop to discuss national refractive errors strategies. The MoH will now develop a draft action plan to be discussed during a national workshop in 2011 based on PAHO-WHO guidelines.

## NEWS FROM SEARO ([varugheses@searo.who.int](mailto:varugheses@searo.who.int))

*Indonesia:* An operational plan for control of blindness was developed in 2 workshops held in November 2010 to design the program and monitoring-evaluation systems. This was supported by the WHO country office.

*Thailand:* A WHO funded training on epidemiology of ear and hearing health was organized by the WHO Collaborating centre, Otolological Centre Bangkok unit (OCBU) in Bangkok in November 2010 attended by 4 countries of SEAR.

*India:* WHO attended the annual meeting of the Sound hearing forum held in Delhi in December 2010. During this a workshop was held on inclusion of hearing impaired children in education.

WHO attended the India Vision 2020 committee meeting. A session on vision 2020 was conducted at the annual congress of the All India Ophthalmic Society, which has decided to develop a community ophthalmology cell. The forum held a strategic planning workshop supported by the International Agency for prevention of Blindness in February 2011.

### *Nepal*

A WHO funded study was carried out in the Gandaki zone of Nepal on the visual outcomes of cataract surgery. The report is now available and will be useful for planning.

*Myanmar* has progressed with trachoma elimination and is being assessed whether it can now enter the surveillance period.



## NEWS FROM WPRO

*Laos and Vietnam, 5 - 12 December 2010:* WHO, the Collaborating Centre in Melbourne and LIONS visit to evaluate human resources training strategy and make plans for future training in Indochina. A final report with recommendations will be available shortly. ([mariottis@who.int](mailto:mariottis@who.int))

*Vietnam, 13 - 17 December 2010:* Vietnam hosted a workshop on eye care system development for Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Republic of Korea and Japan. ([minchiottis@who.int](mailto:minchiottis@who.int))

## UPCOMING EVENTS

| Title of Meeting   | Start       | Finish      | Location | Region |
|--|-------------|-------------|----------|--------|
| <b>2011 Meetings</b>   |             |             |          |        |
| Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma by 2020 meeting  | 15-04-2011  | 21-04-2011  | Geneva   | HQ     |
| Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly (with the Progress report on onchocerciasis control through ivermectin distribution ) | 16-05-2011  | 24-05-2011  | Geneva   | HQ     |
| Global meeting on Childhood Blindness Management (Action Plan Obj. 2 task 59)  | Autumn, TBD | Autumn, TBD | TBD      | TBD    |
| Global meeting on Refractory Errors Management (Action Plan Obj. 2 task 59)  | Autumn, TBD | Autumn, TBD | TBD      | TBD    |

## CONTACTS LIST

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