ACTION FOR HEARING LOSS
Make a Sound Investment

World Health Organization
Hearing loss: the problem

- 360 million people in the world live with disabling hearing loss.
- Up to 330 million people in the world suffer with chronic ear infections (discharging ears).
- Up to 5 out of every 1000 children are born deaf or hard of hearing.
Hearing loss: the problem

- Nearly one-third of adults above 65 years have hearing loss.

- Over 1 billion people are at risk of hearing loss due to listening to music at loud volumes and for long duration.
Millions live with hearing loss

Majority are in low- and middle-income countries of the world.
Hearing loss: the impact

Communication
- Deaf children (*who have no hearing*) would be unable to develop spoken language without interventions.
- Children with hearing loss (*who can hear, but not as well as others*) can have delayed language development.

Education
- Children with unaddressed hearing loss have increased rates of grade failure and greater need for education assistance.
Hearing loss: the impact

Employment

- Adults with hearing loss also have a much higher unemployment rate.
- Among those who are employed, they often earn lower wages compared with the general workforce and retire early.

Social and emotional impact

- Exclusion from communication can have a significant impact on everyday life, causing feelings of loneliness, isolation, and frustration.
- It is associated with early cognitive decline in older persons with hearing loss.
Hearing loss can be addressed

Many causes which lead to hearing loss can be prevented. 60% of childhood hearing loss can be prevented through public health strategies.
Hearing loss can be addressed

Those who develop hearing loss can achieve their full potential through:
- Early identification
- Rehabilitation and use of hearing devices
- Education and empowerment
World Hearing Day

Despite the fact that hearing loss can be prevented and addressed, there is a lack of knowledge on this issue.

- The World Hearing Day is observed on 3 March each year to raise awareness.
World Hearing Day 2017

- Aims to highlight the need for action on hearing loss through focussing on:
  - High cost of unaddressed hearing loss
  - Cost-effectiveness of interventions
Hearing loss: economic impact

- Latest WHO data show that unaddressed hearing loss poses a high global cost.
Costs of hearing loss

Health care system cost, other than the cost of hearing devices:

$67–107 billion

Loss of productivity, due to unemployment and premature retirement:

$105 billion

Societal cost, as a result of social isolation, communication difficulties and stigma:

$573 billion

Cost of additional educational support to children with hearing loss aged 5–14 years:

$3.9 billion
Latest WHO report shows that interventions to address hearing loss are cost-effective.

They bring benefits to individuals and savings to the society/country.

Prevent hearing loss by:
- Protecting against loud sounds
- Identifying and treating otitis media (ear infections)

Identify hearing loss early through screening of:
- newborns
- school children
- adults above 50 years

Provide rehabilitation together with support for continuous use of hearing aids

Improve access to cochlear implants
Time for action

On World Hearing Day 2017, WHO calls for action to address hearing loss.

- Decision makers can address hearing loss by:
  - Allocating suitable resources
  - Integrating ear and hearing care into health systems
  - Building human resource capacity
  - Implementing early identification and intervention programmes
  - Increasing awareness among all sectors of society
Important links

More information and detailed report
http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/world-hearing-day/2017/en/

Information on World Hearing Day
http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/world-hearing-day/en/

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