In the WHO European Region

90 million people have vision impairment or blindness

and of those

3 million people are blind

Almost half of cases of vision impairment could have been prevented or are yet to be addressed.

The leading causes of vision impairment and blindness are cataract and uncorrected refractive errors, which are among the most cost-effective of all healthcare interventions to implement.

Given an ageing population and a rise in noncommunicable diseases, eye care needs are expected to increase substantially.

Eye conditions disproportionately affect underserved and vulnerable populations, leading to equity concerns.

Vision impairment affects individual development, education and work participation and quality of life.

Integrating people-centred eye care within national health systems and preventing vision impairment and blindness contribute towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Eye care should be available to everyone, everywhere. Cost-effective interventions for promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation should be available at all levels of care, including primary care.

Rehabilitation, including access to assistive technology such as spectacles, aims to optimize functioning and is critical for most people with vision impairment and blindness.

World Health Organization Member States have endorsed two global eye care targets for 2021–2030:

30 percentage point increase in effective coverage of cataract surgery

40 percentage point increase in effective coverage of refractive error correction

Take five actions

1. Make eye care an integral part of universal health coverage
2. Implement integrated people-centred eye care in health systems
3. Promote high-quality research
4. Monitor trends and evaluate progress
5. Raise awareness and engage and empower people and communities