The ICO has been working for more than 160 years to improve eye health worldwide. The roots of our organization date back to 1857, when ophthalmologists from 24 countries convened in Brussels for the first International Congress of Ophthalmology. Later renamed the World Ophthalmology Congress, it is the longest continuous international medical meeting.

In the years since, the ICO has grown to be the primary international body representing 170 national, regional, and subspecialty societies of ophthalmologists. We also work closely with professional ophthalmologic societies, non-governmental development organizations worldwide, and have an official relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO). Together, we are building a World Alliance for Sight.

Thanks to the dedication of the ICO Members and partners, we are proud of the impact we have been able to have and the important role we play in working to enhance ophthalmic education, increase access to high-quality eye care, and to preserve and restore vision around the world.

The 37th World Ophthalmology Congress® of the International Council of Ophthalmology will take place 26–29 June 2020 in Cape Town, South Africa. Join your fellow ophthalmologists from around the world and gain an international perspective on the latest ophthalmic advancements. Revenues from the WOC support a wide range of ICO initiatives and programs helping to further our commitment to building a World Alliance for Sight. Learn more at icoph.org/woc

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Through generous contributions from ICOFoundation donors, the ICO can further enhance ophthalmic education and eye health. The success of the ICO is directly related to those who support our efforts.

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The ICO represents 170 Member Societies made up of 160,000 ophthalmologists and ophthalmic personnel working together to increase access to high-quality eye care.

Enhance Education

The ICO is working to address the shortfall of ophthalmologists, particularly in low-resource countries, by stimulating and supporting the training of eye care teams led by ophthalmologists. Through a variety of strategies, including the ICO Fellowships Program, ICO Exams, and our Teaching the Teachers initiative, our educational programs focus on improving ophthalmic training programs and educational standards and create increased opportunities for learning.

Empower Leaders and Societies

A primary objective of the ICO is to support the development of effective leaders and ophthalmologic societies who are able to successfully build high-quality eye care programs and expand access to eye care.

The ICO’s Emerging International Leaders Initiative supports early- and middle-career ophthalmologists, providing resources and opportunities to learn from seasoned mentors. Our World Ophthalmology Roundtable on Leadership Development (WORLD) is an important event that brings leaders of ophthalmologic societies together to exchange information and ideas as part of our efforts to further international eye care.

Advance Eye Health

The ICO leads and coordinates efforts to increase access to eye care, particularly in low-resource settings. We support and implement initiatives like VISION 2020 and collaborate closely with the WHO, IAPB, NGOs, foundations, community health programs, and universities around the world.

1,100+ Fellowships granted

The ICO provides important opportunities for young ophthalmologists from low-resource countries to improve their practical skills and broaden their perspectives of ophthalmology. Learn more at www.icoph.org/fellowship

53,000 Exams taken

Examinations in International Basic Science, Optics & Refraction, Clinical Sciences, and subspecialties are offered at 122 exam centers in 80 countries around the world. Learn more at www.icoph.org/exams

1,911 Residency Program Director course participants

The ICO supports ophthalmic educators to become better teachers, resulting in better-trained ophthalmologists and eye health professionals. Learn more by visiting our Center for Ophthalmic Educators www.icoph.org/educators

The ICO is composed of 114 national, 8 regional, and 43 subspecialty societies around the world.

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Your contribution is tax-deductible (for US donors). Thank you!