

Prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment

The Executive Board,

Having considered the report on prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment,¹

RECOMMENDS to the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

The Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment;

Recognizing that more than 161 million people worldwide are visually impaired, of whom 37 million are blind, and that an estimated 75% of blindness is avoidable;

Recalling resolution WHA56.26 on the elimination of avoidable blindness;

Noting with concern that only 32% of targeted countries had drafted a national Vision 2020 plan by August 2005;

Acknowledging the links between poverty and blindness and that blindness places a heavy economic burden on families, communities and countries, particularly developing countries;

Further acknowledging that control of both onchocerciasis and trachoma has come about through the commitment of broad international alliances;

Noting that many Member States have committed themselves to providing support for the Global Initiative for the Elimination of Avoidable Blindness, known as Vision 2020 – the Right to Sight,

¹ Document EB117/35.

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to reinforce efforts to set up national Vision 2020 plans as called for in resolution WHA56.26;
- (2) to provide support for Vision 2020 plans by sustaining necessary funding at national level;
- (3) to include prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment in national development plans and goals;
- (4) to advance the integration of prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment in existing health plans and programmes at regional and national levels;
- (5) to encourage partnerships between the public sector, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector in programmes and activities for prevention of blindness at all levels;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to give priority to prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment;
- (2) to provide necessary technical support to Member States and support to collaboration among countries for the prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment;
- (3) to monitor progress in the Global Initiative for the Elimination of Avoidable Blindness in collaboration with international partners, and to report to the Executive Board every three years.

Sixth meeting, 25 January 2006
EB117/SR/6

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