World Sight Day this year falls on 9 October. It is an annual international event celebrated on the second Thursday of October to raise the public's awareness of avoidable blindness and vision loss as important public health issues. The day aims to encourage governments to implement and fund national programmes for blindness prevention and to educate target audiences.

Barriers to accessing basic eye health care by the visually impaired exist in most developing countries, resulting in significant gaps around the world in outcomes related to eye health. Visual impairment, and blindness, the most severe form of visual impairment, can limit people's ability to perform everyday tasks and affect their quality of life and ability to interact with the surrounding world.

Most diseases and conditions causing visual impairment and blindness can be prevented or readily treated with known and cost-effective interventions. Good eye care allows people with visual impairment to achieve their full human potential, reach their goals and be active and productive members of society.

2014 is the first year of implementation of WHO's Universal eye health: a global action plan for 2014–2019, which encourages Member States, national and international nongovernmental

partner organizations to promote the theme of universal eye health.

The call to action “No more avoidable blindness” highlights successful interventions crucial to achieve the targets of the global action plan and reduce avoidable blindness by 25% by 2019.

Related links

Universal eye health: a global action plan 2014–2019 [pdf 436kb]

Prevention of blindness and visual impairment programme

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