

□ The policy of the control and prevention of blindness programme is to provide technical support to Member States in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to develop and strengthen comprehensive eye care and prevention of blindness programmes as an integral part at all levels of health systems, in collaboration with partners.

VISION 2020 - The Right To Sight is a global initiative which was launched in 1999 jointly by WHO and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) to eliminate avoidable blindness by 2020. The Initiative facilitates the planning, development and implementation of sustainable national eye care programmes based on core strategies of disease control, human resource development, infrastructure, technology, monitoring and evaluation.

At the Sixty-first World Health Assembly, in order to intensify efforts towards elimination of avoidable blindness, Member States called for an action plan addressing the eye-health agenda. The WHO Secretariat developed, in consultation with Member States and international partners, the Action plan for the prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment. The Action plan defines five objectives, which are to be implemented during the period 2009 to 2013.

In order to strengthen the eye health and prevention of blindness programme, the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly (WHA), which took place in Geneva from 20 to 27 May 2013 endorsed a new global action plan for prevention and control of avoidable blindness "Global Action Plan 2014–2019 for universal eye health".

Under this initiative, the programme:

develops comprehensive eye care and prevention of blindness plan at all levels of health system, in collaboration with partners  
conducts capacity-building for eye care and expansion of eye care at district level  
implements disease control of major causes of blindness (cataract, glaucoma, trachoma, refractive errors, low vision and childhood blindness)  
develops human resources for eye care  
conducts infrastructure and technology strengthening in order to provide adequate care facilities, particularly in underserved areas in countries

integrates eye care into primary health care services  
conducts outreach programmes for cataract surgery in priority countries  
conducts operational research on eye health  
collects surveillance and data on the major causes of blindness.

The programme works in collaboration with Member States and partners, including the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, the Arab Medical Union, IMPACT-EMR, the Kuwait Patients Helping Fund Society, Lions Clubs International Foundation, Manhal Charity Organization, Rotary International, Federation of Islamic Medical Associations, Al-Basar International Foundation and the IHH Foundation for Human Right, Freedom and Humanitarian Relief.

### **Related link**

[Draft action plan for the prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment 2014–2019 | Arabic \[pdf 190kb\]](#)

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