

# Prevention of Blindness and Deafness News

## NEWS FROM HQ

Last month, we were delighted to welcome Dr Shelly Chadha ([chadhas@who.int](mailto:chadhas@who.int)), our new medical officer for hearing impairment. A meeting was held in early January with some of the key stakeholders to explore future strategies and collaboration for developing a sustainable and effective programme for implementation of Primary Ear & Hearing Care.

**Executive Board** 16-23 January 2012. All details and information are available on the WHO website <http://www.who.int/governance/eb/en/index.html>. A report by the Secretariat on Implementation of the action plan for the prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment will be discussed by the Board.

In December, WHO's Director-General signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the President of The International Association of Lions Clubs. The MoU will enhance our joint collaboration in tackling trachoma and childhood blindness and enable the start of new activities in the area of diabetes and eye disease.

**Vision 2020 Coordinating Group** had its first meeting in November 2011. The Coordinating group was established last year on the recommendation of a joint WHO-IAPB taskforce. It is composed of four members from WHO and four from IAPB. Its first task is to develop priorities for joint work.

**The Joint Action Forum, Board of the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control** (APOC) was held in Kuwait (12 - 14 December). APOC stakeholders discussed achievements to date and requested APOC management in collaboration with the Committee of Sponsoring Agencies (CSA) to prepare a detailed workplan for extension beyond 2015 to be submitted to the next JAF in December 2012.

### **World Sight Day was celebrated on 13 October with a range of events in a number of countries. Examples included:**

**Afghanistan:** Free Ministry of Public Health eye camps with support of WHO and the Kuwait's Patients Helping Fund Society.



**Bahrain:** The Ministry of Health visited several residential homes and local health centers.

**Egypt:** Inauguration of the Lions Ashmoon Eye Hospital in Menoufia. A number of partners including WHO participated.



**Islamic Republic of Iran:** This was organized by the Ministry of Health, the WHO Collaborating Centre "Ophthalmic Research Centre", Shahid Beheshti Medical University, the Iranian Diabetes Association, and other partners. The Centre conducted free screening programmes of Diabetic Retinopathy for 600 Patients with diabetes.



**Italy:** WHO/HQ participated in World Sight Day in Rome. The Minister of Health, the President of the Senate and other political leaders participated. There were presentations on the status of blindness and visual impairment and work on chronic eye diseases.

**Oman:** Activities were held to promote joint efforts to tackle avoidable blindness. The theme was diabetic retinopathy and visual impairment.



**Pakistan:** Activities including an event at the College of Ophthalmology and Allied Vision Sciences, King Edward Medical University, Lahore.

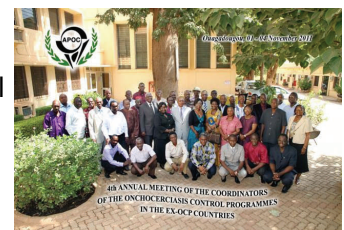
**Trinidad:** PAHO - MoH University of West Indies: Public Lecture and National Workshop.

## NEWS FROM AFRO

Sightsavers recently visited AFRO to review the current implementation of interventions of the first year of agreement and to discuss future joint work in Africa.

Rapid assessments of avoidable blindness surveys have recently been completed in **Burundi, Mozambique, Madagascar** and **Uganda**, where little or no baseline population data were available.

**Burkina Faso:** Ouagadougou, November 2011: The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of National Coordinators of the Onchocerciasis Control Programme (ex-OCP) countries in West Africa offered an opportunity to review progress and address remaining challenges.



**Mauritania:** Nouakchott, October 2011. The MoH organized a meeting to review the progress towards the elimination of blinding trachoma. Only a few districts still need Mass Drug Administration (MDA), and trachomatous trichiasis is under control. While the MDA in the remaining districts is being planned, the country is preparing the surveillance plan for the no-more endemic districts and provinces. The GET2020 Secretariat will provide feedback on the plan and support its implementation, with WHO playing an important role in the surveillance phase.

## NEWS FROM EMRO

**Dubai:** November 2011. EMRO participated in an IAPB organized regional meeting to review the progress made at country levels in the implementation of the WHO action plan for the prevention of avoidable blindness 2009-2013. Financial support came from the Islamic Development Bank. Eleven countries participated.

In 22-23 November, EMRO conducted a two-day preparatory meeting for Task Force to develop the draft training resources for primary eye care and data collection form for eye.

**Jordan:** November 2011. WHO participated in a stakeholders meeting organized by the MoH in Amman.

**Somalia:** September 2011. An eye camp was run by the National Eye Center, Mogadishu, and Somali in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Somalia, WHO and Manhal Charity Organization.



## NEWS FROM PAHO/AMRO

**Belize:** November 2011. PAHO-MoH National workshop to review the implementation of the national programme.

**Barbados:** September 2011. PAHO-MoH National workshop to review the draft of the Prevention of Blindness national strategic framework.

**Colombia:** October 2011. PAHO-CBM-MoH. Neonatal Hearing Care National Workshop. November 2011: IACO regional meeting organized by OEPA; workshops to develop the Regional Low Vision Plan of Action 2012-2013; development of the Regional ROP Plan of Action 2012-2013.

**Grenada:** October 2011. PAHO-MoH National workshop to review implementation of the national program.

**St Kitts:** October 2011. PAHO-MoH National workshop to discuss next steps in the development of a national plan.

**St Vincent:** October 2011. PAHO-MoH Visit to discuss implementation of the national programme.

**Trinidad:** November 2011. Caribbean NGO Collaborating Group Meeting and December 2011: VISION 2020 Caribbean Workshop.

## NEWS FROM SEARO

**India.** September 2011. IAPB–WHO regional workshop on prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment at Aravind Eye Hospital. Thirty-four participants from 9 countries joined.

**Indonesia:** September 2011. A meeting of the healthy eye and ear districts project was held in Tangerang.

**Nepal:** The mid-term evaluation report of Vision 2020 is now available.

## NEWS FROM WPRO

**Fiji:** October 2011. The Honorable Minister of Health of Fiji signed the VISION 2020: The Right to Sight Declaration. The MoH has endorsed the new Fiji national plan for prevention of blindness 2010-2013.

**Philippines:** November 2011. Supported by WPRO, the MoH carried out a national strategic planning workshop for the prevention of blindness. Eighty-five eye care providers were there.

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