



## **Global Eye Health Sector Support for World Health Organization**

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness issued the following statement:

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness and the global eye health sector have worked in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) for over 45 years. The WHO's leadership has been critical in taking us to the verge of eliminating trachoma and river blindness, the main infectious diseases that cause blindness, as well as blinding malnutrition in children, and significantly reducing the prevalence of vision impairment worldwide.

COVID-19 does not respect borders. Tackling it requires global cooperation. Now more than ever the WHO has a vital role in coordinating the global response and supporting governments and civil society to protect the vulnerable, including those who are blind or have sight loss. We call on world leaders to work together and support WHO's efforts at this critical time.

Bob McMullan

President, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness

Peter Holland

Chief Executive, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness

### **Notes to Editors:**

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#### **About IAPB**

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) is the overarching alliance for the global eye care sector. We have over 150 members worldwide drawn from NGOs and civil society, corporate organisations, professional bodies and research and eye care institutions.

We were founded in 1975 to lead international efforts in blindness prevention activities. We work towards a world where no one is needlessly visually impaired, in which everyone has access to the best possible standard of eye health, and eye care is a core part of Universal Health Coverage.

[www.iapb.org](http://www.iapb.org)



## Key facts

- At least 2.2 billion people have a vision impairment that may or may not be addressed.
- Of those, at least 1 billion people have a vision impairment that could have been prevented or has yet to be addressed.
- In addition, 2.6 billion people have myopia, including 312 million children under 19 years of age.
- Between 2011-2018 the number of people at risk of Trachoma blindness fell by 51% from 325 million to 157.7 million.
- River blindness (Onchocerciasis) could be the first blinding disease to be eliminated globally—probably by 2025.

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