

# PUBLIC HEALTH CONTROL OF VISION LOSS FROM GLAUCOMA IN AFRICA

## KAMPALA RESOLUTION

### Preamble

A multidisciplinary group of 34 experts met in Kampala, Uganda from 17-18 April 2012 to review the challenges faced by countries of the African region on account of needless irrecoverable visual impairment and blindness from the glaucoma group of eye disorders. The meeting was convened by the Prevention of Blindness Union (PBU) in collaboration with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) Africa Region, and funded by the Islamic Development Bank and IMPACT- EMR.

The group adopted the following resolutions:

**Recognizing** that an estimated 6 million people are affected with potentially blinding or disabling glaucoma in Africa, while 0.5 million are already blind from the disease

**Taking cognizance** that glaucoma is the commonest cause of irreversible blindness worldwide and in Africa in particular

**Mindful of the fact** that ageing is a risk factor for glaucoma, given that the African region is witnessing a rapidly increasing number of elderly persons aged 60 years and above

**Aware** that needless blindness from glaucoma impacts negatively on health and well-being, undermines the quality of life and affects economic productivity

**Recalling** resolution WHA59.25 on avoidable blindness and WHA53.14 on non-communicable diseases

**Acknowledging** the link between poverty and disability

**Noting** that the World Health Organization urges governments to adopt good policies on ageing and health

We,

**Glaucoma specialists, health specialists and other specialists from the development sector, state representatives, service providers and managers, advocates, assembled at the Kampala Meeting on Public Health Control of Vision Loss from Glaucoma, held on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012, together,**

Declare that,

Glaucoma is an emerging priority for all eye health interventions as an integral part of the elimination of avoidable blindness

Glaucoma is a chronic non-communicable disease that requires lifelong treatment

Being of African descent is a risk factor for glaucoma, it appears earlier, and rapidly progresses to vision loss

Glaucoma is a disease of public health significance and needs public health control strategies

We call upon,

**Supra-national and national professional organizations, ophthalmological societies and advocacy organizations, civil society organizations, national and international development organizations, consumer groups and corporate sector,**

- To highlight the importance of controlling vision loss from glaucoma as an integral part of eye health care and in health and safety policies
- To urge Ministries of health to incorporate glaucoma in Non Communicable Disease programmes, and Ministries of Finance and Trade to waive duties and taxes on drugs needed for life-long treatment of glaucoma
- To advocate to the technology sector and pharmaceutical companies to work with professional organizations and consumer groups in the development and distribution of affordable diagnostic and other equipment and drugs with particular application to the African population

**The Electronic, Print and Social Media,**

- To highlight and communicate to the general public, in consultation with professional organizations and consumer groups, issues of glaucoma, to disseminate information on effects of untreated glaucoma and the potential role of the population, patients and disability groups in the public health control of vision loss from glaucoma

**Reaffirm our commitment to**

- Improve and apply the knowledge base with particular reference to populations of African descent
- Strengthen the organizational and institutional capacities within public health, eye health and control of non-communicable diseases and other key stakeholders to implement initiatives aimed at controlling vision loss from glaucoma
- Create opportunities to develop networks of key stakeholders in addressing the issue of glaucoma holistically at supra-national and national level
- Develop closer co-ordination between government ministries, departments, civil society organizations and consumer groups for purposes of undertaking concerted interventions on glaucoma at the national and local levels as an integral part of eye health development

Kampala

18 April, 2012

