

EM/RC49/R.6 VISION 2020: THE RIGHT TO SIGHT–ELIMINATION OF AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS

The Regional Committee,

Having considered the presentation on a global initiative for the elimination of avoidable blindness;

REQUESTS the Director-General to take necessary action to submit the following draft resolution to the 56th Session of the World Health Assembly in May 2003;

The Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly,

Recognizing that 45 million people in the world today are blind and a further 135 million people are visually impaired, and that this represents a massive social, economic and disease burden and therefore an impediment to national development;

Acknowledging that 90% of the world's blind and visually impaired people live in the poorer countries of the world;

Aware that most of the causes of blindness are avoidable and that the treatments available are among the most successful and cost-effective of health interventions;

Recalling that a global initiative to eliminate avoidable blindness by the year 2020, Vision 2020: The Right to Sight, was launched in 1999 by WHO and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness;

Appreciating the efforts made by Member States in recent years to address the issue of avoidable blindness and mindful of the need for further urgent action;

1. **URGES** Member States:
 - 1.1 To commit to the global initiative to eliminate avoidable blindness by the year 2020;
 - 1.2 To establish a national committee to coordinate and implement the Vision 2020 plan of action;
2. **REQUESTS** the Director-General:
 - 2.1 To further collaboration between WHO, Member States and the partners of Vision 2020: The Right to Sight;
 - 2.2 To mobilize additional resources to ensure that the target of elimination of avoidable blindness is reached by 2020.