

# World Health Organisation (WHO): Seventy-third World Health Assembly (73<sup>rd</sup> WHA)

*Agenda 11.7: Integrated, people-centered eye care, including preventable blindness and impaired vision*



**Thank you, Chair.**

India has taken note of the report of the Director General on integrated, people-centered eye care, including preventable blindness and impaired vision. India is aware of the global burden of blindness and visual impairment and its socio-economic aspects. We are taking all the necessary measures to address eye diseases for elimination of avoidable blindness from the country and for this we have launched the National Programme for Control of Blindness & Visual Impairment (NPCBVI). NPCBVI is a comprehensive eye care programme addressing all causes of blindness and is being implemented all over the country.

**Chair,**

India's National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 is committed to provide accessible, affordable and quality health care to all with focus on preventive and promotive aspects. The introduction of Ayushman Bharat with its twin pillars of Health & Wellness Centres and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is a significant milestone towards India's path to universal health coverage. The Health and Wellness Centres are envisioned to provide an expanded range of primary healthcare services including eye care as one of the essential services. Free essential drugs and diagnostics are also being made available under our initiative for comprehensive primary health care.

**Chair,**

Information, Education and Communication is an integral part of India's national programme to educate people on eye health. The programme promotes various simple measures such as vitamin A supplementation, fortification of common foods to prevent nutritional blindness, environmental sanitation to prevent trachoma and other eye infections, prevention of eye injuries, rubella vaccination to prevent congenital cataract, regular eye check-up of school children for early identification of refractive errors and correction.

Mobile Ophthalmic Units and Tele-ophthalmology services are being used to address the eye care needs of the disadvantaged. To improve the quality of eye care services, training of eye surgeons is also being supported through Regional Institutes of Ophthalmology and other recognized training Institutes and by providing financial assistance for dedicated eye OT set-ups and wards.

**Chair,**

We are committed to prevention and control of avoidable blindness and fully appreciate and acknowledge the global efforts in this direction. We believe in collaboration and sharing of knowledge and technical know-hows among the countries and stakeholders for collective efforts for elimination of avoidable blindness from the globe.

**Thank you.**