Excellency,

RE: Call for the Appointment of a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Vision

We write as 63 Member States of the United Nations in the hope that you will recognize, like us, the benefit of an appointment of a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Vision to serve as a global champion for vision and eye health and provide a focal point for multi-sector cooperation.

More than 2.2 billion people, almost one-third of humanity, are living with vision impairment. At least 1.1 billion people suffer the consequences of sight loss which is easily preventable; they simply don't have access to basic eye care services. This costs the global economy $411bn in lost productivity each year. 90% of avoidable sight loss is experienced by people in low- and middle-income countries and those left behind tend to be the poorest and most marginalized groups in countries of all income levels – including women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, local communities, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants.

Improving the world's eye health will have far reaching benefits in the fields of health, wellbeing, education, work and ultimately the global economy. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 75/310 'Vision for Everyone: accelerating action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals' recognized the importance of vision as a foundation for sustainable development. The international community is now committed to reaching the 1.1 billion people who do not have access to the eye health services that they need by 2030. The United Nations resolved that its development system take the necessary steps to coordinate the implementation of the resolution.

The appointment of a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Vision will support your office and the World Health Organization in mobilizing national action and political commitment on vision and eye health, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where the need is most prevalent. He or she would promote cross-sector partnerships; building synergies with other development priorities and working with the relevant UN entities as well as with academia, research institutions, the scientific community, civil society and the private sector, in order to improve access to eye care services for all. In addition, the Special Envoy would help raise public awareness of eye health, tackling issues such as the stigma associated with eye health.

This is an opportunity to ensure all people around the world have equitable access to eye health and to tackle a development issue which can be solved this decade. We strongly believe that the appointment of a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Vision would accelerate the international community's implementation of resolution 75/310 once and for all.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal with you and your staff at your earliest convenience.
Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.
H.E. Mr. Jamal Fares Alrowaiei
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the United Nations Kingdom of Bahrain

H.E. Mr. François Jackman
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Carlos Fuller
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Júlio César Freire De Morais
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cabo Verde to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Zhang Jun
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Ivan Šimonović
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations
H.E. Mrs. Maria Theofili
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations

H.E. Mrs. Ruchira Kamboj
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations

H.E. Mrs. Carolyn Rodrigues Birkett
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Co-operative Republic of Guyana to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Maurizio Massari
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Brian Christopher Manley Wallace
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations

H.E. Ms. Thilmeeza Hussain
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Enkhbold Vorshilov
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations
H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Pedro Comissário Afonso
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mozambique to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Amrit Bahadur Rai
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations

H.E. Ms. Carolyn Schwalger
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Jaime Hermida Castillo
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations

Mohamed Al Hassaan
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Munir Akram
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations
H.E. Ms. Mathu Joyini
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Ian Dereck Joseph Madeleine
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Seychelles to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Burhan Gafoor
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Singapore to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Boštjan Malovrh
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Peter Mohan Maithri Pieris
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the United Nations

H.E. Ms. Mathu Joyini
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations

H.E. Ms. Anna Karin Eneström
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations