



Region:	Africa
Nominee's full name:	Aaron Thembinkosi Magava
Job Title:	Ophthalmologist and IAPB Co- Chair Southern Africa
Organisation:	Marondera Provincial Hospital, Zimbabwe
Nominated by:	CBM
Represented by:	Muhammad Babar Qureshi
Seconded by:	Brien Holden Vision Institute

Nominee's statement:

The International Agency for Prevention of Blindness has over the years been leading efforts to improve eye health care services globally. In Africa, these efforts have seen major milestones being achieved which included appointment of a point person in WHO Afro to coordinate activities. As IAPB–Africa, the vision is “for all people in the region to have access to the highest possible standard of eye health care”. To achieve this vision, there are immediate and long term objectives that have been developed and that need to be strengthened. Ultimately, the major goal is to be able to fit eye health into country health systems for sustainability of the services in line with WHO health system pillars which are health workforce, health information, financing, medical supplies, service delivery, leadership and governance. The objective is to deliver eye health in the context of Primary Health Care, which WHO is advocating and African Governments have pledged to implement.

In the African setting, we realize that we cannot do everything at once and that we can achieve very little on our own hence the famous concept on “how to eat an elephant”: “This is achieved bit by bit with a lot of help from friends and family” (courtesy of Prof. Colin Cook).

IAPB Africa developed a Strategic Plan 2014– 2023 with immediate objectives for Human Resources 2014 –2018 (phase 1) being the following:

- To integrate eye health workforce planning into broader HRH planning process
- To develop competency frameworks for the five different levels of the eye health workforce
- To strengthen the eye health training institutions across Africa



IAPB Afro is now midway through phase one and we have to evaluate and chart our next steps forward taking into consideration our failures and success in the past 2 years.

At this point it is imperative to re-emphasize the importance of working together as a cohesive group to achieve our goals. A good team in the region is of outmost importance. This calls for round table meetings where different organisations can air their views and concerns based on their individual objectives which have to be taken into consideration at every step of the planning and implementation phases.

I have been involved with IAPB Africa Region for the past 8 years as the Southern Africa Co-Chair. In addition to this, I have worked in implementing a provincial Vision 2020 unit in the past 14 years where I started the program from 'scratch' with partnership of CBM, Sightsavers, Zimbabwe Council for the Blind and Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Care. I was the acting Zimbabwe National Eye Care Coordinator at the time until 2015.

From my duties in the portfolios I have mentioned, I have interacted with NGOs based in the region, WHO personnel in the region and various MOH government officials on issues relating to eye health services. This interaction has afforded me the opportunity to understand how the different actors in eye health interact and challenges faced in provision of eye health which is compounded by the fact that eye conditions cause morbidity rather than mortality and are of a chronic nature.

Aaron Magava