

Board of Trustees Meeting  
28 March, 2014

---

## **CONSENT AGENDA ITEM 3.1b: Eastern Mediterranean Report**

---

### IAPB EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN UPDATE REPORT

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

##### **Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia develop their new National Eye Health plan**

Three more EMR countries namely Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have developed their new eye health action in line with the 2013 World Health Assembly resolution WHA 66.4 requesting countries to develop and implement the WHO global action plan: Universal eye health: a global action plan 2014-2019. In all the countries the plan was developed by the Ministries of Health in collaboration with WHO EMRO and IAPB-EMR. The plans were developed through a participatory 2-3 days workshop of all stakeholders in the respective countries under the guidance of experienced facilitators. To ensure implementation of the plan, an innovative approach of building the plan in alignment with the WHO health system blocks and the different countries existing development and health plans and priorities was ensured.

Earlier last year Qatar and Libya had developed their plans also in a similar way. All the countries are now working to commence implementation of the plans.

##### **EMR Trachoma Alliance inaugurated**

The EMR Trachoma Alliance held its inaugural meeting on 15-16 December 2013 in Dubai, UAE. The meeting was formally inaugurated by the Chair IAPB-EMR Prince Abdulaziz Ahmad AlSaud. It was attended by national coordinators for prevention of blindness and GET 2020 coordinators from EMR countries with trachoma or recent past evidence of the disease. Representatives from local and international NGOs working on trachoma in the EMR, including Al-Basar International, CHEF, CBM, The Fred Hollows Foundation, Sightsavers, and ICTC also attended, in addition to experts in trachoma control.

The meeting collated and reviewed available mapping data on trachoma and status of control in the EMR. Priority countries/districts/Governorates for mapping and SAFE strategy intervention were identified and cost for the mapping and intervention was estimated for each country.

A follow up meeting of some members of the EMR alliance was held to develop proposal for funding a comprehensive trachoma control plan for 3 big countries in the alliance – Egypt, Pakistan and Sudan. It was held on 26 February, 2014 in Doha. This was part of efforts from ORBIS International and IAPB towards securing grant from the Qatari government.

## **EMR to collate data on eye health human resources across the region**

---

IAPB-EMR with special grant from its Chairman Prince Abdulaziz Ahmed Al Saud will be undertaking a baseline assessment of all available eye health human resources in the 22 EMR countries. This was announced at the 60th WHO EMRO regional committee meeting held in Muscat, Oman in October 2013. This data lacking in many countries will be particularly useful for development of new national action plans in line with the new WHO action plan Universal Eye Health. The exercise will be organized by the EMR Human Resource working group.

## **GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Forum on Avoidable Blindness.**

---

Sightsavers Middle East and PBU launched the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Forum on Avoidable Blindness. The Forum will serve as a regional platform for stronger collaboration between foundations and NGOs from the region to pool their resources and streamline their activities towards a better impact on prevention of blindness in the region.

The official launch of the Forum organised in collaboration with IAPB-EMR was held in Dubai on 30 October 2013. The event had in attendance several organisations working in the field of prevention of blindness, representing 12 countries. The Forum, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan, was attended by HRH Prince Abdulaziz Ahmad Al Saud, Chairman of PBU.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Regional meeting on global action plan for eye health for development and implementation of plan**

---

The IAPB EMR and Prevention of Blindness Union (PBU) in collaboration with WHO EMR will conduct a 3 day workshop on “Universal eye health: a global action plan 2014-2019” for 2 days and a Child Eye Health workshop for 1 day from 18-20 March at the WHO EMRO office in Cairo Egypt. The meeting will be attended by regional / international experts, WHO, national coordinators for the prevention of blindness from the EMR countries and other international and regional NGOs. The main objectives of the workshops are to orient Member States on how to develop an effective integrated new eye health plan in line with the Global Action Plan 2014-2019, and ensure its implementation.