



IAPB COUNCIL OF MEMBERS MEETING
17 SEPTEMBER, 2013

AGENDA ITEM 1.2F: WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL REPORT

WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL REPORT

Significant achievements on a regional or national level

1. REGIONAL PLANNING AND WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

In May 2013, the WHO hosted a Western Pacific Regional Consultation Meeting to consult and develop a regional action plan (RAP) for blindness prevention. The RAP echoes key themes and activities of the Global Action Plan and reinforces the need for national and regional action. Held in Manila, the three-day meeting determined regional priorities, and was the first meeting of its kind for WHO in the Region. Representatives from the governments of Japan, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Mongolia, the Philippines, Australia, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, the Federated States of Micronesia and Vietnam came to Manila for the consultation. Observers and technical advisers from IAPB, CBM, Peking Union Medical Hospital, the Fred Hollows Foundation, Pacific Eye Institute and Vision 2020 Australia also contributed. Participants had a unique opportunity to reflect on how activities will be implemented at a national level and work through challenges and barriers. The RAP will be presented at WHO's Western Pacific Regional Committee Meeting in October. In a similar way, NGO members of Vision 2020 Australia have collaborated to develop a five-year regional plan, which borrows the objectives and principles of the Global Action Plan.

2. SUBREGIONAL WORK IN THE PACIFIC

IAPB has continued to lead advocacy to increase activity on trachoma and diabetes in the Pacific Island countries. With support from the Fred Hollows Foundation, a planning meeting was held in Fiji in July to consider priorities, and IAPB hosted an information session at the annual conference of the Pacific Eye Care Society (PacEYES) in June. IAPB also attended the biennial meeting of Pacific Health Ministers in Samoa, convened by WHO and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

3. NATIONAL PLANNING: VIETNAM

This year, a new National Plan for Vietnam is being developed for the period 2014-2019. Using AusAID funds, IAPB is supporting work with the Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology (VNIO) and the Fred Hollows Foundation to facilitate consultations on the plan. Three meetings have been planned to solicit input from provincial health representatives in the north, central and southern regions and a final national workshop is scheduled for mid-October before the final draft is presented at the Ophthalmological Society Conference later that month. For the first time, the plan will be submitted to the Prime Minister for endorsement. The profile of eye health has risen in Vietnam recently, after a visit to VNIO by the Deputy Prime Minister and additional funding pledged by AusAID for the health ministry to develop human resources for eye health.

4. **NORTHERN PACIFIC**

We are working closely with Health Ministry from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to arrange for an ophthalmologist from the Philippines to work on the island of Chuuk and also purchase ophthalmic equipment for the hospital. A representative from FSM led part of the consultations to develop the regional action plan in Manila in May, so it is exciting to have such a deep level of interest from a country where we previously had no connections.

Opportunities or key issues

1. **CHINA**

IAPB's work in China goes from strength, evident recently at the 2013 NGO Forum in Shenyang, held in July this year. Despite a change in leadership and reform within the Ministry (now known as the National Health and Family Planning Commission) the government of China still sees IAPB and Dr Leshan Tan as the key channel for communication to NGOs and source of advice on strategic issues. The NHFPC presented a project plan to engage eye health NGOs in a larger initiative to reform county hospitals, and has requested that IAPB again facilitate training for national and provincial health representatives on VISION 2020 in October this year. Lions has also announced project funds for IAPB to translate and distribute a Chinese-language edition of the Community Eye Health Journal next year. Despite support for operational costs from the Fred Hollows Foundation, CBM, Brien Holden Vision Institute and some funds redirected from IAPB HQ, the IAPB Secretariat in China remains a challenge to fund beyond the short term. We are short around USD 45,000 for operating costs in 2014, and need financial buy-in to ensure IAPB's valuable work continues in China.

2. **DATA COLLECTION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Collecting data, monitoring our progress and assessing our impact is also challenging. This is important internally, for our NGO stakeholders, and also for our primary donor, AusAID. The three indicators in the Global Action Plan should alleviate previous confusion for health ministries but, without support, may still prove difficult for countries to report against in the years to come. In 2012, we began to collate and disseminate all the key national eye health statistics and have been sharing this on our website, and presented this in a Regional Update report. We check and update this information regularly by liaising with country contacts and checking published sources. IAPB is also working with WHO and ICEH to conduct Eye Health Systems Assessments (EHSA) with reports on a Lao PDR, Cambodia and a Pacific Island country to be finalized later this year. Early next year, we hope to co-host two workshops (one for Asian countries and one for the Pacific) with WHO to provide training on RAAB methodology and data collection against the Global Action Plan. A bigger challenge is finding the right methodology to measure the impact of our advocacy work, and monitor progress against national policy work.