Tom Rosewall – Nominating Statement

During my attendance at last year’s IAPB Council of Members in Beijing, I heard it discussed that an increased focus upon more local level eye care activities may partially hold the potential of generating higher levels of referrals and treatment at secondary and tertiary levels of care, thus generating even greater success in addressing avoidable blindness.

Our award-winning British Foundation, Vision for a Nation, has successfully delivered Primary Eye Care at nationwide scale in Rwanda, with benefits at higher levels acknowledged by the nation’s leading ophthalmologists and Rwanda’s Ministry of Health. The program has evolved to be an integral component of the nation’s universal health programs. It is uniquely self-sustaining financially and has grown to be a critical ingredient of the nation’s holistic eye care strategy.

As the CEO of our Foundation, with over 400 days on-the-ground in Rwanda both designing and implementing the program nationwide over the past two and one half years in support of the nation’s Ministry of Health, I believe that the learnings from my recent primary eye care experience, along with my extensive business experience, can be utilized to further advance success of the IAPB’s mission around the world.

Our Foundation’s highly collaborative approach in helping to unify Rwanda’s eye care system has, I believe, benefitted from the entrepreneurial and innovation-focused approach that I have worked to instill throughout our organization both in Africa and the United Kingdom. Our funding by James Chen and DFID, and since I have become CEO our Trustees, other charities, the UK’s Big Give, UBS Optimus and most recently USAID, reflects a robust portfolio of financially-supportive parties, all expressing interest in supporting our expansion to other emerging nations.

For more than three decades, I have held senior global management positions with major publicly-held global corporations. As a result, I am very familiar with Executive and Board Member role responsibilities, organizational governance, and strategy development and tactical implementation. I believe that these skills have been crucial to the successful stewardship of our charitable Foundation and can be put to good use in support of the IAPB.

The UK’s Charity Awards, organized by Civil Society Media, specifically recognized our “leadership, management and organizational governance” when awarding our Foundation top prize in this year’s “International Aid and Development” category. Most recently, I was fortunate to be honoured with the “Rising Chief Executive” award by Britain’s Third Sector Excellence for having made “outstanding contributions to his or her organisation, or the wider sector, in the first two years in post”.

Our plans to scale our program internationally, in whole or in part, are ambitious and dovetail with our Founder, James Chen’s, recently launched Clearly Initiative. Our aim is that through these initiatives, and with intensified partnership with others, we will ultimately significantly benefit the people of emerging nations, and support the IAPB, its many dedicated members, and the eye care sector in its totality. My biography can be viewed at http://visionforanation.net/about-us/staff/tom-rosewall/

As such, I would be honoured to participate as an active Board Member of the IAPB, sincerely appreciate the nomination and seconding of Messrs Doolan and Naidoo, and commit myself to working with other Trustees and Members to advance the mission and objectives of the Agency.