

A growing global challenge

Over 2 billion people are living with poor sight and for over 1 billion of these people, this sight loss could have been avoided or treated. This represents a significant and rapidly growing public health challenge – but one that can be effectively addressed given that over 90% of sight loss cases are preventable or treatable through low-cost interventions such as glasses and cataract surgery.

An economic opportunity

Sight is foundational to economic and societal participation. It results in healthier workforces and higher productivity at work, better attendance and educational outcomes at schools as well as healthier and happier communities.

Our new research proves that if action was taken to reach the 1 billion people living with avoidable sight loss, the boost to the world economy would be \$447 billion annually. It would result in 13 million extra years of schooling, 22 million more people employed, and 304 million people relieved of unpaid caregiving, predominantly women.

\$447 billion

boost to the world economy

22 million

more people employed

13 million

equivalent school years gained

1.2 million

**fewer injuries from
crashes on roads**

304 million

**people, predominantly women,
relieved of the caregiving bur-
den and able to work more**

\$1 : \$28

**every \$1 invested in eye health can yield
a \$28 return in low- and middle-income
countries**

The Global Summit for Eye Health

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda will host the first ever Global Summit for Eye Health in November 2026 to focus on the value of vision to countries, communities and individuals.

Five years on from the UN Resolution on Vision, the event will be an opportunity to secure a new wave of ambitious commitments and transform a shared vision into action.



Host country

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA 2026



Antigua and Barbuda is a sovereign country in the Caribbean composed of Antigua, Barbuda and numerous small islands.

In November 2026, the country will host the bi-annual Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting where leaders from the 56 Member States convene to discuss and promote shared values, development initiatives, and collaborative solutions to global challenges.

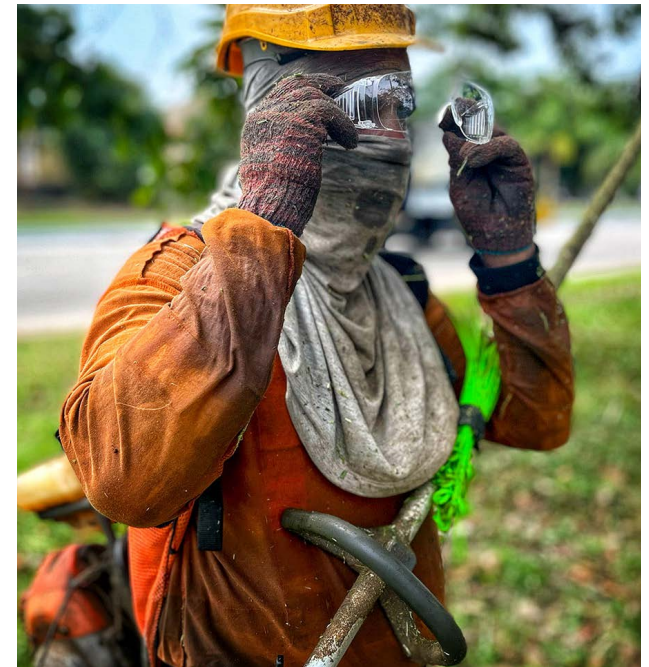
In September 2025, Prime Minister Gaston Browne announced that the country will host the first Global Summit on Eye Health.

The Value of Vision

Our new Investment Case, launched at the 79th United Nations General Assembly, outlines the economic costs and benefits of addressing sight loss and provides a clear and actionable path for countries to deliver an immediate positive impact on economies, workforces, schools and communities.

The Global Summit is supported by a wider messaging campaign around the tangible and undeniable 'Value of Vision'. The phrase is our central organising thought for 2026, and the evidence, including our new research on the return of investment and impact on work, education and communities, will be the core part of all our communications.

The 'Value of Vision' provides the basis for a clear narrative and messaging which will resonate, helping to ensure the summit is successful, impactful and its outcomes are enduring. But it will also provide the broader context in which we will continue to educate and change behaviours and attitudes with the public and influence change outside of the event.



Making the world see the Value of Vision

The burden of eye health already costs the global economy billions every year. But for the first time, research in *'The Value of Vision – the Case for Investing In Eye Health'* shows the huge economic return that is possible with targeted investment. Every \$1 invested in eye health can yield a \$28 return in low- and middle-income countries.

Six Accelerators

Six key accelerator interventions can supercharge the fight against sight loss and deliver huge productivity benefits back to countries by 2030:



Expand Screening in the community

Deliver simple sight tests in communities and integrate them into existing infrastructure of processes, with an emphasis on school children, professional drivers and adults over 40 years old



Give out reading glasses on the spot

Empower these same community screeners to hand out ready-made reading glasses if needed right after the screening. They can be fitted and dispensed by people with minimal training and no medical experience.



Increase capacity in the workforce

Increase capacity in the existing workforce for those who need a clinical diagnosis. As well as training more optometrists, there should be an emphasis on training up existing mid-level eye care professionals, deploying mobile units and using tele-refraction.



Boost surgical productivity and teams

Train new surgeons and improve the existing surgeons' tasks, workflow, support from allied health workers. And their kit and equipment. This has the potentials to increase surgical productivity by 40-50%.



Remove barriers to access

Reduce blockers like cost, distance and stigma that stop people from accessing the care they need. Subsidies for procedures, support with travel to facilities, and information campaigns significantly increases usage and surgical output.



Make cataract surgery even better

Ensure cataract operations are delivering the same high-quality sight for everyone, everywhere innovation training techniques, biometry and better post-op care can all lead to better sight and fewer complications.

Unlocking potential

The Global Summit for Eye Health will convene senior leaders from government, private and public sectors, NGO's and funding institutions to help reach the 1billion people living with avoidable sight loss. The Summit will ask leaders to:

Act

- Commit to leadership and action from the highest levels of Government to embed eye health into health systems.
- Activate nationally owned eye health plans to deliver change and an integrated approach.
- Implement policy changes to address sight, recognising it as a whole-of-life issue that needs a holistic, whole-of-government approach.

Allocate

- Increase resources in eye health, recognising the return on investment that is possible both nationally and internationally.
- Explore innovative funding mechanisms and new ways to fund eye health.
- Foster partnerships with the private sector.

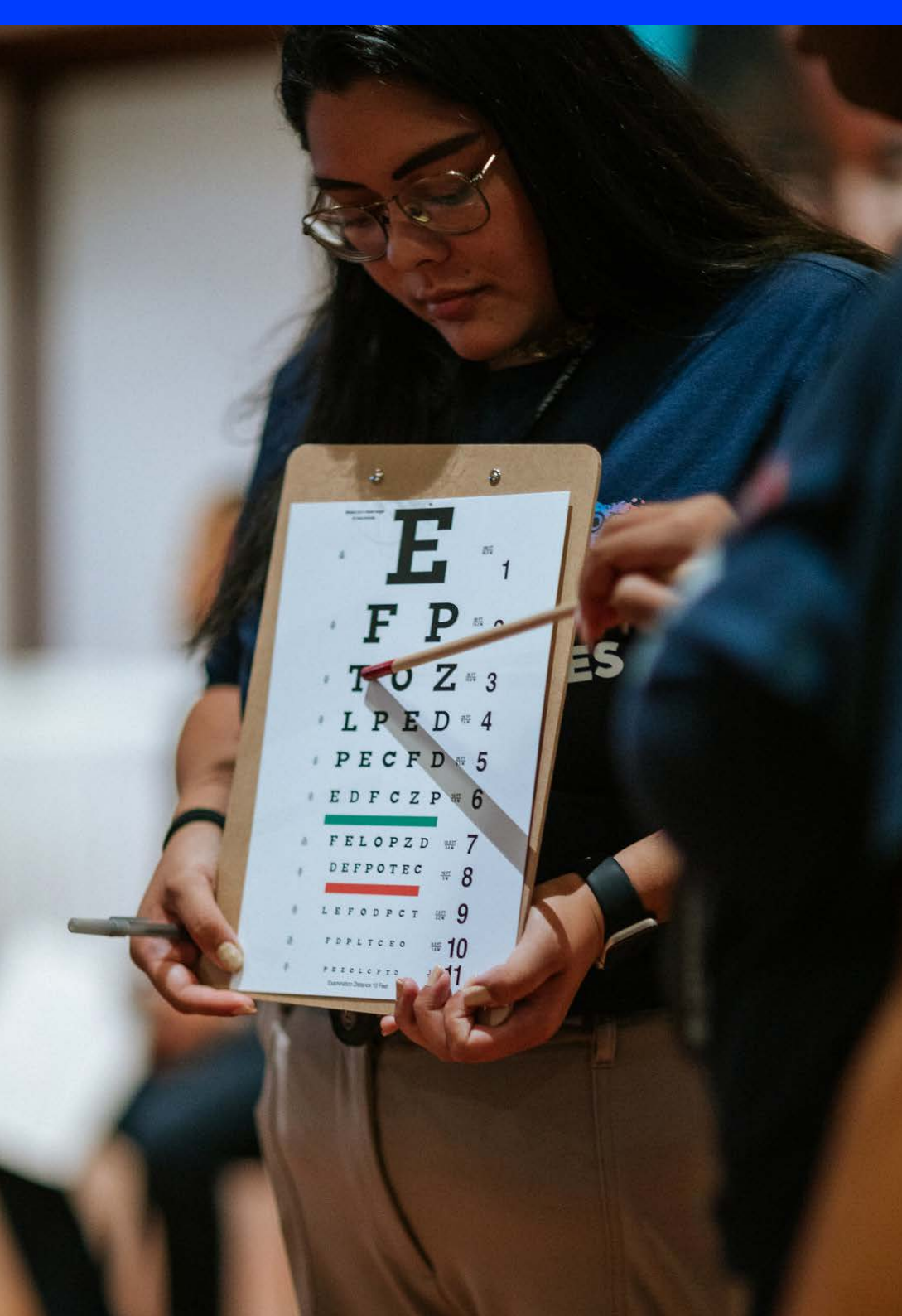
Accelerate

- Collaborate across the public and private sector and wider society to harness the educational and societal benefits of addressing poor sight.
- Implement the 6 accelerator interventions quickly and as a minimum and scale these up as progress is made.
- Harness technology and fast-track research and development in this area.

Find out more

The Value of Vision: The case for investing in eye health outlines how addressing sight loss can provide an immediate and positive impact on the economy, workforce, education and communities.





Policy Framework

A new eye health policy framework launched at the World Health Assembly in 2025 outlining the steps that government departments or ministries can take to support their own priorities and implement national approaches that are fitting for their populations' needs. Together, these steps will help ensure there is universal access to eye care as a fundamental aspect of well-being, productivity and prosperity, and that those with unavoidable blindness are empowered to participate in and contribute to society.

- 1. Integration** Integrate eye health into broader health systems including school health and beyond, and improve access to screenings, services, rehabilitation, equipment and technology.
- 2. Financing** Prioritise sustainable financing for eye health including domestic resourcing, public- private partnerships and support from international financial institutions and donors.
- 3. Monitoring** Support the tracking of progress against national and global eye health targets through strengthened national monitoring mechanisms.
- 4. Regulation** Create the optimum regulatory environment through tax changes, regulatory reform, standards and practices, for example removing regulatory barriers for access to spectacles enabling innovation and scale in the public and private sectors.
- 5. Workforce** Increase access to quality eye health services through the recruitment, training, distribution and retention of eye health workers as well as investing in technological advances to expand access.
- 6. Partnership** Partner with the private sector, civil society and academia to promote eye health and deliver services which are aligned with national government plans and policies.
- 7. Inclusion** Ensuring equity between population groups in access to services, and including persons with vsight loss in policymaking.

For full information please visit

https://www.iapb.world/value_of_vision_policy_asks