



THE QUEEN ELIZABETH
DIAMOND JUBILEE TRUST

TRACHOMA INITIATIVE

CELEBRATING SUCCESS ON THE ROAD TO NATIONAL TRACHOMA ELIMINATION IN UGANDA

Today, a celebration takes place in Dokolo, Uganda, where, due to the significant progress achieved to date towards eliminating blinding trachoma as a public health problem, the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust's Trachoma Initiative is now expanding into up to 14 new districts in the East, West and North of Uganda with the support of Lions Clubs International Foundation.

The celebration event will be attended by senior country officials including representatives from the Ministry of Health and other key partners involved in the delivery of the Trust's Trachoma Initiative in Uganda.

Uganda is a trachoma-endemic country in East Africa where an estimated 10 million* people are at risk of developing the disease. The Trust's Trachoma Initiative was launched in Uganda in November 2014 to tackle the disease. It is anticipated that this expansion in the Trachoma Initiative, matching work funded by USAID, will enable Uganda to achieve national elimination of trachoma across the country by early 2019.

Trachoma is caused by a bacterium called chlamydia trachomatis and it affects both children and adults. If not treated, trachoma can lead to irreversible blindness. The careful distribution of azithromycin helps reduce the prevalence of trachoma by interrupting the life cycle of trachoma causing microorganisms. The mass antibiotic distribution is funded and delivered by USAID / RTI through their 'Envision' programme. All antibiotic drugs for the programme have been donated by Pfizer.

The Trust's Trachoma Initiative supports both the surgery required to help those who already have trachoma trichiasis and investments in facial cleanliness and environmental improvement activities. All people with the advanced stage of the disease are offered free surgery under this programme. This simple operation corrects their in-turned eyelashes and prevents further damage to the eye which could eventually cause blindness.

Facial cleanliness and environmental hygiene are also crucial factors in preventing the spread of trachoma. In Uganda, local partners are raising awareness of the importance of regular face and hand-washing and how environmental factors such as access to water and basic sanitation reduces the risk of transmission and infection.

Since 2014, the Trust's Trachoma Initiative has supported the government of Uganda, working in collaboration with The Carter Center and delivered by members of the International Coalition for Trachoma Control (ICTC) - Sightsavers, CBM, WaterAid, John Hopkins Center for Communication Programmes, Concern Worldwide, World Vision and Water Missions Uganda alongside other local implementing agencies - to eliminate blinding trachoma.

Dr Astrid Bonfield CBE, Chief Executive of The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust said:
"It is with great pleasure that we can announce our expansion of the Trachoma Initiative across 14 new districts of Uganda and we are proud to be working with the Ministry of Health

and our remarkable partners towards the elimination of the disease across the country by 2019.”

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust (‘the Trust’) is a charitable foundation established in 2012 to mark and celebrate Her Majesty The Queen’s lifetime of Service to the Commonwealth. With a mission to enrich the lives of people from all backgrounds across the Commonwealth in honour of The Queen, the Trust has chosen to make the elimination of avoidable blindness a major focus of its work.

Between 2014 and 2019, the Trust’s Trachoma Initiative plans to eliminate blinding trachoma in Fiji, Kenya, Kiribati, Malawi, Solomon Islands, Uganda, Vanuatu and Zambia, and make significant advances towards elimination in Mozambique, Nigeria and Tanzania. It will also support work to eliminate the disease in Australia.

The initiative is based on a large-scale programme of surgery, antibiotic distribution, facial cleanliness and environmental improvement initiatives. This tried and tested strategy, known as SAFE, is endorsed by the World Health Organization and has already yielded strong results in other Commonwealth countries such as Ghana.

Notes to Editors

Initiative goals in Uganda

By 2019, the programme will have:

- Targeted up to 31 districts in all endemic regions.
- Managed up to 35,000 cases of people with TT in order to achieve national elimination.
- Trained over 60 new surgeons.
- Improved community health messages on good hygiene and sanitation practices.
- Lobbied at district, national and global level to improve access to safe water sources and supported sanitation in the programme areas.

About The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust’s Trachoma Initiative

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust’s Trachoma Initiative is working to eliminate blinding trachoma in countries within the Commonwealth, in honour of Her Majesty The Queen.

Between 2014 and 2019, the initiative aims to support national governments in Africa to eliminate blinding trachoma in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Malawi and make significant advances towards elimination in Mozambique, Nigeria and Tanzania. In addition to this it aims to eliminate blinding trachoma in the Pacific Island nations of Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu as well as to strengthen the local capacity to address the public health consequences of this blinding disease in Australia.

The initiative is being undertaken in partnership with the International Coalition for Trachoma Control (ICTC) and will be coordinated by ICTC members: Sightsavers in Africa and The Fred Hollows Foundation in Australia and the Pacific.

For more information please visit: www.endtrachoma.org

About The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust is a charitable foundation established in 2012 to mark and celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's lifetime of Service to the Commonwealth.

The Trust has received donations from governments, corporate partners, trusts, foundations, community groups and individuals from across the Commonwealth. Its mission is to enrich the lives of people from all backgrounds within the Commonwealth, and its programmes work in alliance towards eliminating avoidable blindness and to empower a new generation of young leaders.

With a five-year timeframe in which to deliver successful programmes, the Trust's aim is to leave a lasting legacy, owned by the whole Commonwealth, to honour Her Majesty The Queen.

For more information please visit www.jubileetribute.org

About the Lions Clubs International Foundation

Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) is the official charitable organization of Lions Clubs International, a leading humanitarian organization.

Since founding in 1968 they have strived to sustain Lions' humanitarian service goals throughout the world, awarding over 13,000 grants totalling more than one billion US dollars.

They support the Lions' work across the globe in four key areas, including sight saving, serving youth, disaster relief and meeting humanitarian needs. Donations from 1.4+ million Lions in 210 countries and geographic areas provide the vast majority of the revenue received by LCIF.

For more information please visit <http://www.lionsclubs.org>

About the International Coalition for Trachoma Control (ICTC)

The International Coalition for Trachoma Control (ICTC) is a coalition of non-governmental, donor, private sector, training and research organizations bound by a strong sense of collaboration that exemplifies how an international public-private partnership can achieve remarkable results. Established in 2004, ICTC contributes to global efforts to eliminate trachoma by supporting the Alliance for the Global Elimination of Trachoma by 2020 and by advocating for and implementing the WHO-endorsed approach for treatment and prevention, the SAFE strategy.

Progress towards the elimination of blinding trachoma over the last decade demonstrates the incredible impact of increased partnership within the trachoma community: the number of surgeries undertaken has increased from 22,000 in 2004 to over 230,000 in 2013; drug distribution has rapidly expanded from about 4 million in 2004 to almost 55 million doses in 2013 and important gains have been made on both the facial cleanliness and environmental improvement components of the SAFE strategy, often in collaboration with other sector-wide programmes. Overall, more than 30 countries currently have elimination programmes underway.

For more information, please visit www.trachomacoalition.org

About the ICTC Implementing partners in Uganda

The Trachoma Initiative in Uganda is being coordinated by The Carter Center and delivered by ICTC members: Sightsavers, Christian Blind Mission (CBM), WaterAid, John Hopkins Center for Communication Programmes, Water Missions International, Concern Worldwide and World Vision alongside other local implementing agencies.

* Please see: <http://www.endtrachoma.org/countries/uganda/> for more information.