

# 10 FACTS ABOUT BLINDNESS AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

## Fact 1

Worldwide, 285 million people are visually impaired due to various causes; 39 million of them are blind.

## Fact 2

121 million are visually impaired because of uncorrected refractive errors (near-sightedness, far-sightedness or astigmatism). Almost all of them could have normal vision restored with eyeglasses, contact lenses or refractive surgery.

## Fact 3

90% of visually impaired people live in low- and middle-income countries.

## Fact 4

51% of all blindness is due to age-related cataract, the leading cause of blindness.

## Fact 5

Cataract surgery and correction of refractive errors are among the most cost-effective health interventions.

## Fact 6

Age-related causes of visual impairment and blindness are increasing, as is blindness due to uncontrolled diabetes.

## Fact 7

Up to 80% of all blindness in adults is preventable or treatable. Among children, the major causes of avoidable blindness include cataract, retinopathy of prematurity (ROP), and Vitamin A deficiency.

## Fact 8

Blindness caused by infectious diseases is decreasing globally due to public health action. Blinding trachoma affects 40 million people today, compared to 360 million in 1985.

## Fact 9

Around 1.4 million children under age 15 are blind. Yet approximately half of all childhood blindness can be avoided by treating diseases early and by correcting abnormalities at birth such as cataract and glaucoma.

## Fact 10

For decades, WHO has been working with global partners to eliminate the main causes of avoidable blindness, strengthening country-level efforts by providing technical assistance, monitoring and coordination.