



REGIONAL COLLABORATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BLINDNESS

St John's Antigua, Nov 30 : The Caribbean Council for the Blind/ Eye Care Caribbean and Sightsavers with support from their international and regional partners and the European Commission, will host a two day meeting at th Hyatt Hotel in Port of Spain, Trinidad on the 1st and 2nd of December, 2011.

The meeting will focus on VISION 2020: THE RIGHT TO SIGHT, the global initiative for the elimination of avoidable blindness, and will give persons involved in eye health from across the region an opportunity to learn, share and network, leading to a more cohesive, regional approach to reducing the prevalence of blindness in the Caribbean.

Technical sessions will be led by Dr. Richard Wormald - (Consultant Ophthalmologist, Moorfields Eye Hospital, London), Dr Hazel Shillingford-Ricketts(Consultant Ophthalmologist, Dominica) and Dr. Dawn Grosvenor - (Glaucoma Specialist, Barbados), supported by and Dr. Juan Carlos Silva - (Regional Advisor in Prevention of Blindness, PAHO-WHO).

Case studies depicting effective national level eye health advocacy will be presented from mandeville, Jamaica, St Lucia and Guyana . Up to 4% of the region's population are blind or severely visually impaired and one of the main reasons for the Caribbean's high prevalence of avoidable blindness is the extreme shortage of Ophthalmologists, Optometrists, Refractionists and other eye health professionals.

Arvel Grant (CEO, CCB) said *‘I have no doubt that thousand(s) of persons are becoming blind from one or more of the five leading causes of preventable blindness in the Caribbean: Glaucoma, Cataract, Diabetic Retinopathy - the group of conditions which cause blindness in children, and Refractive errors. That is why we support the principles and targets of Vision 2020: The Right To Sight and are actively supporting the development of human resources for eye health in the region.’*

PURPOSE

“Preventing blindness and visual impairment; while restoring sight and creating opportunities for persons whose sight cannot be restored”.

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