



EINGEGANGEN

28. Nov. 2007

Tel. direct: +41 22 791 2111
Fax direct: +41 22 791 4755
E-mail :

In reply please
refer to: B7-370-5

Your reference:

Professor Allen Foster
President
Christoffel-Blindenmission
Nibelungenstrasse 124
D-64625 Bensheim

26 NOV 2007

Dear Professor Foster,

We are fortunate to have Christoffel-Blindenmission (CBM) as a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and as a founding member of VISION 2020. CBM has worked with WHO for 20 years to promote health services for under-served people in our world, particularly those persons with disability.

Eliminating avoidable blindness by 2020 is the laudable goal of *VISION 2020 – the Right to Sight*, and your admirable international work is helping contribute to the achievement of this goal. It is an ambitious goal - yet one that is within reach, if governments, health professionals and non-governmental organizations work together in this common cause.

It is profoundly sad when a child is deprived of the chance to experience the world in the same rich way as those blessed with the gift of sight, and for adults, blindness can bring poverty and social exclusion, not to mention an increased strain on a family already struggling under poverty and deprivation.

I strongly believe that the international community can make a real difference in preventing vision loss for so many people. And even the most modest investments are rewarded with tremendous benefits in terms of enhanced independence, quality of life and alleviation of poverty.

CBM has been at the forefront of the joint WHO – IAPB, VISION 2020 initiative working in more than 100 countries and I admire the work of CBM and the many dedicated people that last year brought practical support to over 18 million people to prevent or treat visual, hearing, physical and mental impairments.

.../..

26 NOV 2007

Yet, at the same time, we cannot be complacent and ignore those who lack the advantages we enjoy. The millions of children and adults around the world who continue to be deprived of basic eye care and sight restoration measures. VISION 2020 is about those people, and it is about our collective capacity to make a difference.

In conclusion, I am delighted to extend my warmest congratulations to CBM staff and partners around the world as your organization marks 100 years of experience and excellence.

This is certainly an occasion to celebrate with CBM and an opportunity to encourage you to do yet more to promote the rights of persons with disability and to work with governments to improve the access and availability of health care to people with disability.

As your motto says and as you have demonstrated*Together, we can do more*.....

Yours sincerely,



Dr Margaret Chan
Director-General