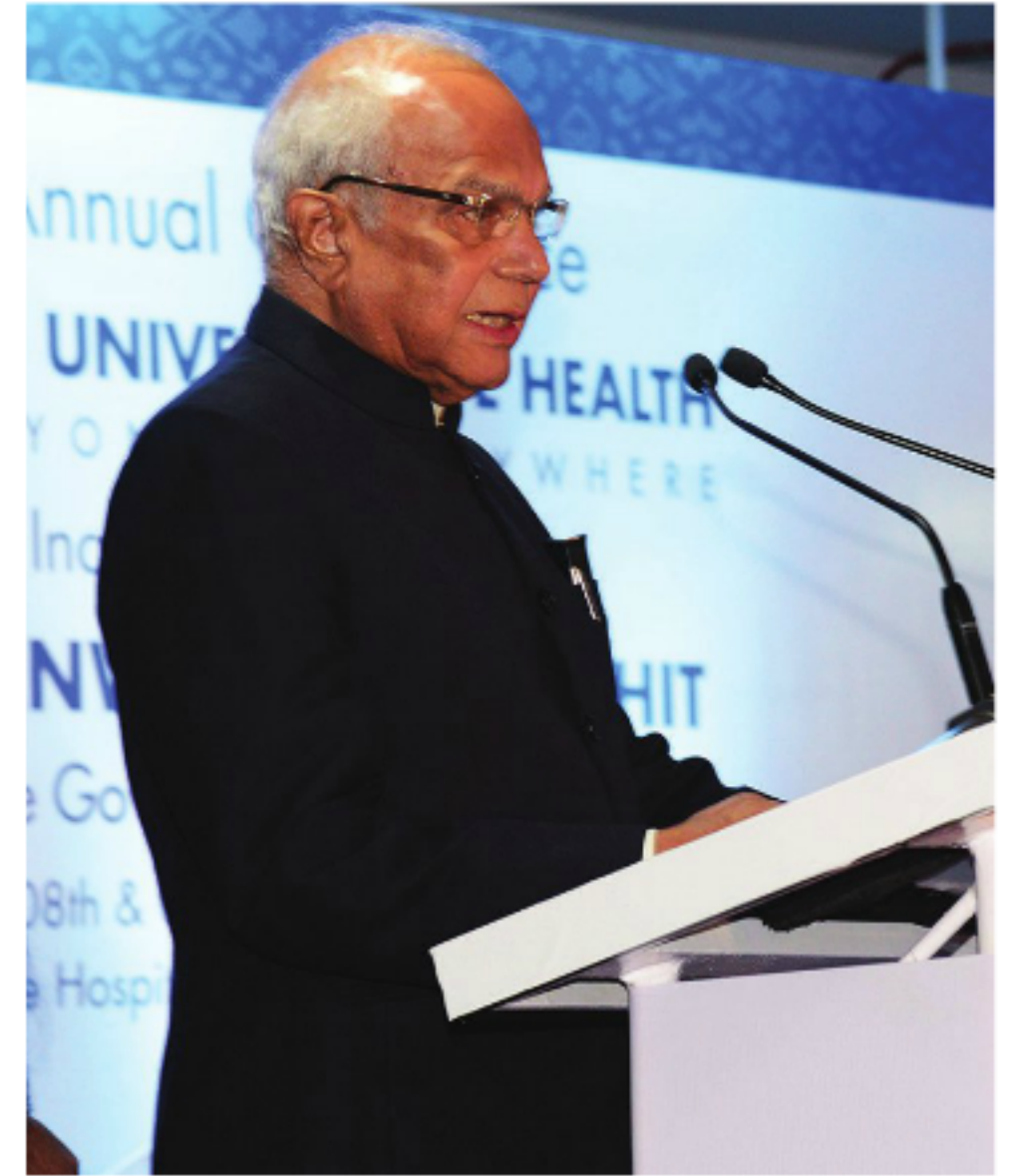


VISION 2020

INDIA CONFERENCE IN CHENNAI

CHIEF GUEST BANWARILAL PUROHIT
ADDRESSING THE GATHERING



VIPS AT THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY

Vision 2020: The Right to Sight, a joint programme of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), is a global initiative for the elimination of avoidable blindness. Launched in 1999, it aims to promote: "A world in which nobody is needlessly visually impaired, where those with unavoidable vision loss can achieve their full potential."

The global initiative has subsequently been complemented and built upon by a series of

additional plans. The most recent, Universal Eye Health: A global action plan 2014 – 2019, was unanimously adopted by Member States at the World Health Assembly in 2013 as part of its resolutions. This latest plan has an overall vision of the initiative and also adds a further dimension around "universal access to comprehensive eye care services".

The global action plan (GAP) also sets itself a global target that aims to reduce the prevalence of avoidable visual impairment by 25% by 2019 (compared to the



YOGITA RAJGANDHI AT THE CONFERENCE



▲ OPTOMETRY SESSION IN PROGRESS



DELEGATES LISTENING TO A PRESENTATION ON CORNEAL OPACITY BLINDNESS

baseline prevalence of 2010). This is now seen as a more realistic global target as to what can be achieved, rather than the original target of global elimination by 2020. Some individual countries may achieve, or be close to, elimination by 2020. With these clearly defined goals, this is a year in which to analyse Vision 2020 developments and achievements, and look at future challenges beyond 2020.

Vision 2020: The Right to Sight India, a registered not-for-profit organisation is a key driver of the global initiative. It is a

collaborative effort of NGOs, eye care organisations and the Indian government to coordinate and advocate for improved eye care programmes, to gain and share knowledge and together develop solutions to achieve quality, comprehensive and equitable eye care.

The 15th annual conference of Vision 2020: The Right to Sight India, hosted by the Aravind Eye Hospital, Chennai on 8 and 9 June 2019, provided a platform to discuss and deliberate strategies for the way

forward keeping in view the global approach for integrating eye health into universal health. (Established in September 2017, the hospital is one of the newest tertiary care centres of the Aravind Eye Hospitals network.)

The welcome address was delivered by Dr RD Ravindram, chairman, Aravind Eye Care System, in the august presence of the chief guest, Governor of Tamil Nadu, Banwarilal Purohit. In his welcome speech, Dr Taraprasad Das, president of Vision 2020 India, pointed out that the focus of the conference was more on aspects of community ophthalmology, covering policy, technology and the sharing of knowledge. Dr P Namperumalsamy too spoke on the occasion; organising secretary Dr Haripriya Arvind proposed the vote of thanks.

The meet featured 20 dynamic sessions with a balanced mix of talks and panel discussions. These crucial discussions offered a platform for sharing skills, enhancing knowledge and networking. The programme featured the Annual General Meeting, four parallel tracks on



advocacy for eye health, eye care delivery to the unreached, quality assurance for cataract surgery, and skill enhancement for optometrists and ophthalmic assistants.

The scientific sessions focused on practices in the eye care system and its successful management from clinical to managerial. The topics were based on inputs from Vision 2020 member organisations with the courses designed to provide more scope for in-depth exploration, expansive discussions and interaction.

Among other experts, senior optometrist Yogita Rajgandhi presented an oral paper on her research topic in paediatric eye health and education for tribal children in the category of childhood blindness and vision centres. Unnati Vaish from Sitapur Eye Hospital presented a talk on the role of low vision aids amongst the rural population of Sitapur District, Uttar Pradesh.

The series of scientific sessions, free papers, workshops on optometry, a poster presentation and exhibition, a photo contest,

quiz programme, an awards ceremony, a cultural event, and the announcement of travel fellowships for students made for a comprehensive event.

The conference was attended by more than 600 delegates from 18 states and two Union Territories from 115 organisations in India. The attendees comprised heads of organisations, ophthalmologists, programme planners, managers, optometrists, administrators, coordinators, outreach and paramedical /technical staff from government and non-government institutions/organisations working in eye health and related sectors, and students/fellows.

The 16th annual conference of Vision 2020: The Right to Sight India, hosted by the Siliguri Greater Lions Eye Hospital and Shri Vidyasagar Oswal Eye Hospital, will be held in the charming city (12 km from Bagdogra Airport) in the plains of Darjeeling District, West Bengal.

OPTOMETRISTS POSE FOR THE CAMERA MAN ▼



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