



**THE OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NIGERIA (OSN)  
41<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE,  
HELD AT HOTEL PRESIDENTIAL, PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE  
FROM 23<sup>RD</sup> -26<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2016**

**COMMUNIQUÉ**

The Ophthalmological Society of Nigeria (OSN), an umbrella organization of all Eye Physicians and Surgeons (Ophthalmologists) in Nigeria held its Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference (AGM/SC) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The theme for this year’s Conference was “Technology for Ophthalmic Care in the Developing World” with a subtheme “Rehabilitation of the irreversibly blind”.

The Ophthalmological society of Nigeria is committed to reducing the burden of blindness and rehabilitating the irreversibly blind in Nigeria through, among other things, promoting high ethical standards of the practice of Ophthalmology (the Science of Vision and Disease) and collaborating with Government, other Eye Health groups and international bodies, to achieve universal coverage for Eye Health.

This Conference brought together global, and local stakeholders in Eye Care such as the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), LV Prasad Institute, India and including guests from the Oil & Gas, Manufacturing, Pharmaceuticals,

Instrumentation and Technology Industries. A special symposium was held with representatives of the Coalition of the Eye Health NGDOs of Nigeria.

The meeting highlighted the following points:

1. Technology has become a force that drives virtually every aspect of eye health. The use of technology in various forms has become pervasive in eye care, either from developing materials for eye care service delivery, such as intra-ocular lenses, to involvement in disease control such as, the use of retinal lasers in Diabetic Retinopathy, Glaucoma and Cataract surgeries. This also includes web-based development of human capacity for eye health.
2. Manufacturing has a significant impact on the economy of any nation. It has been developed and effectively deployed in eye health worldwide. However, in Nigeria, manufacturing accounts for only about 10% of the National GDP. This poor performance has had an impact in the success of prevention of blindness and visual impairment in Nigeria. We express concern that about 70% of the eye drops and other ophthalmic consumables used in Nigeria are imported. Local manufacturers are faced with the burden of high taxation, poor power supply and unavailability of critical raw materials for eye drop production. The private sector as well as the Government, both at National and State levels, must create the enabling environment to make local manufacturing attractive. This will encourage more companies to invest in eye drop, ophthalmic consumables and plastic production thus making these products available and affordable.
3. The rehabilitation of the irreversibly blind, which is a continuum of eye care, social and educational services, has remained at a fledgling state. This is as a result of underdeveloped information channels, infrastructure, technology and human capacity.
4. The Ophthalmological Society of Nigeria (OSN) plans to improve their engagement with the Federal Ministry of Health to ensure adequate contribution to critical policy issues and active implementation of eye health activities in Nigeria. Key areas of focus are the inclusion of comprehensive eye health data such as Cataract Surgical Rates (CSR) and Coverage, in the National Health Information Management System (NHIMS) and the integration of Primary Eye Health into Primary Health Care System of the country.

5. Zonal and State chapters of the OSN and the Eye Care Centers have been challenged to monitor eye health indices for the Global Action Plan for Eye Health and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
6. The OSN, through the OSN Foundation, will engage with the Eye Health NGDO Coalition group and other Eye Health Professionals, to provide the necessary lead and guidance to help establish the roadmap to excellence in Eye Health for our country Nigeria.

To this end,

We are convinced that for all these issues to be adequately addressed, the following actions will be required:

1. Government waivers in the importation of raw materials and Public-Private Partnerships in developing biomedical technology and manufacturing capabilities that would increase local production of eye drops and ophthalmic consumables in large quantities.
2. An OSN alliance with the News Media in order to raise public awareness and to promote eye health education among the populace, including information dissemination on the services with which to engage for eye health problems. The objective is to give the public the confidence that a high quality standard of eye care services and professionalism of the Ophthalmologists in the management of eye conditions, is available in Nigeria. The range of possible interventions offered, covers the spectrum of eye care services, including refractive surgery.

**WE ARE CONVINCED THAT EYE CARE SERVICE WOULD BECOME MORE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE IF THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE ADOPTED AND IMPLEMENTED.**

Lastly, we believe that if the existing body of knowledge and technology are appropriately deployed, the journey towards achieving the goal of Universal Eye Health in Nigeria, could be significantly advanced.

Signed



**Prof Sebastian Nwosu**

**President, OSN**

**National Secretariat Headquarters**

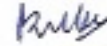
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