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**STATEMENT BY MR NOEL CHUA
REPRESENTATIVE, INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SOCIETIES/INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY (IFOS/ICO)**

Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates:

The International Federation of Ophthalmological Societies (IFOS) was established in 1933 and composed of national organizations, subspecialties and other societies related with ophthalmology. The executive arm is the International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO).

ICO/IFOS primary focus is on elevating the level of eye care worldwide with special emphasis in the developing world. A member of the Board of the International Agency of Prevention of Blindness, the organization is committed to the implementation of VISION 2020, The Right to Sight and has taken leadership in the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) Human Resources Working Group.

Recognizing the unmet public need for eye care

- where at least 161 million people are severely visually impaired 37 million blind and 124 million with low vision
- burden of blindness is greatest in the least developed regions of the globe
- global vision loss certain to increase in developing countries due to population growth and ageing unless concerted action is taken

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- not enough ophthalmologists
- mal-distribution
- not enough training programme
- not focused on public need, e.g. community eye health
- lack of infrastructure and professional development for those who are trained

The IFOS/ICO, in coordination with IAPB, accepted the challenge in providing the leadership for training of ophthalmologists and personnel needed to meet the public requirement for eye care and work within the National Vision 2020 programme of each country.

The IFOS/ICO goals are:

- increase access of quality eye care worldwide
- improve existing training programmes to world standard, i.e. curricula for residents, medical students, allied professionals, Residency Programme Directors
- develop training programmes for each eye care team member (ophthalmologist, specialist, middle-level eye personnel, nurses, managers, and eye health worker)
- provide continuing professional development and access to new infrastructure, scientific discoveries and evidence-based practice (International Clinical Guidelines, Basic and Clinical Assessments, ICO Fellowship Programme)
- in internationally competent and qualified eye care professional

The Vision 2020 Human Resource Working Group, which IFOS/ICO is heading under the leadership of Dr Bruce Spivey, President of ICO is dedicated to optimizing and expanding training of eye care personnel around the world and will provide technical support for planning and implementation of efforts to enhance training. It will also develop

- Regional Centre of Excellence (6 centres are envisioned) Indonesia and Nigeria are online for 2006-2007 Carl Zeiss contribution of \$200,000 support
- International WHO Collaborating Centre

- Global Resource Centre
- Regional Resource Centre
- National Resource Centre

With World Health Assembly resolution WHA59.25 adopted in May 2006, IFOS/ICO:

A. calls on Ministers of WPRO countries to:

- to develop and strengthen eye care services and integrate them in the existing health care system, including training and re-training of health workers in visual health

B. calls on the Director-General to:

- provide support to collaboration among countries for the prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment in particular in the area of training of all categories of relevant staff
- inclusion of prevention of blindness and visual impairment in the WHO Medium-term Strategic Plan 2008-2013 and provide budget for 2008-2009.

Thank you for your attention.