



Concept Note

2026 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) *Act, Allocate, Accelerate: Advancing Coordinated SDG Delivery Through Eye Health* High-Level Side Event

Summary:

In the context of the 2026 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the United Nations Friends of Vision (FoV), under the chairmanship of the Permanent Missions of Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, and Ireland to the United Nations, will convene the high-level side event *Act, Allocate, Accelerate: Advancing Coordinated SDG Delivery Through Eye Health* to examine how governments and partners can better align policy, financing, and delivery systems to end avoidable sight loss and strengthen coordinated, cross-sector progress under the 2030 Agenda.

Achieving the SDGs will depend not only on what is delivered, but how it is delivered. SDG 17 highlights the need for stronger partnerships, yet progress remains constrained by fragmented approaches that fail to translate political commitment into coordinated action. Affecting over 2.2 billion people globally, vision impairment undermines education, employment, productivity, and inclusion, yet remains insufficiently integrated into national development strategies. Addressing avoidable sight loss requires coordination across health, education, labour, and infrastructure systems, while strengthening outcomes across these sectors, including learning, workforce participation, and safety.

This fragmentation is particularly evident in SDG 11 and sustainable urban systems, including road safety. Each year, 1.3 million people die in road traffic crashes, yet vision impairment—a significant, preventable risk factor—remains largely overlooked, reflecting a failure to integrate across sectors. Road safety, therefore, provides a practical case to examine how partnerships can better deliver on interconnected SDG outcomes.

Against this backdrop, the Global Summit for Eye Health presents a critical opportunity to move from fragmentation to coordinated action. Its principal outcome, the Global Compact for Eye Health, will establish a multi-stakeholder policy framework to align priorities, mobilize commitments, and strengthen accountability. The event will support engagement toward the Compact and demonstrate how more effective partnerships can deliver measurable progress across the SDGs.

Expected Outcomes:

- **Political Priority Setting:** Increased recognition among Member States and stakeholders of eye health as an enabler of progress across the SDGs, particularly in relation to SDG 11 and SDG 17.
- **Advancing Sector Integration:** Promotion of the integration of eye health across key sectors, including transport, health, labour, and education.
- **Mobilizing Compact Endorsement:** Launch of the Global Compact for Eye Health as a unifying, multi-stakeholder policy framework, alongside a call for Member States and partners to signal endorsement
- **Accelerate Global Summit Engagement:** Increased engagement and early alignment from governments, UN agencies, and partners in the lead-up to the Summit, supporting the development of coordinated national and institutional commitments.

Event Details:

- **Title:** *Act, Allocate, Accelerate: Advancing Coordinated SDG Delivery Through Eye Health*
- **Date:** 10 July 2026, 13:15 – 14:30
- **Location:** United Nations Headquarters Conference Room 5
- **Co-Sponsors:** UN Friends of Vision Group (Permanent Missions of Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, and Ireland to the UN)
- **Event Contact:**
 - Claxton Duberry, First Secretary, Antigua and Barbuda
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 - Brooke Blanchard, Head of Global Advocacy, IAPB bblanchard@iapb.org

Event Overview:

The high-level side event will take the form of a dynamic, moderated panel discussion, bringing together global leaders, United Nations agencies, civil society representatives from the global eye health sector, and individuals with lived experience. The session will combine high-level interventions with moderated exchange, enabling panelists to reflect on national, multilateral, and sectoral approaches to strengthening coordination across systems.

The discussion will be structured to move from framing the delivery challenge to identifying practical pathways for implementation, with space for audience engagement and interactive dialogue. Panelists will share concrete examples of cross-sector collaboration, highlighting lessons learned and opportunities for scaling integrated approaches. The session will conclude by drawing out key insights and areas for continued collaboration in the lead-up to the Global Summit for Eye Health.

Objectives:

- **Frame the delivery challenge under SDG 17**
Examine the gap between political commitment and coordinated implementation, and position strengthened partnerships as essential to delivery.
- **Demonstrate cross-sector integration through eye health**
Illustrate how coordinated approaches across health, education, labour, transport, and infrastructure systems can strengthen outcomes.
- **Use road safety as a practical case for integration**
Highlight how multisectoral coordination can be applied in practice to reduce risk and improve outcomes.
- **Identify actionable pathways for coordinated delivery**
Surface practical approaches to align policy, financing, and implementation across sectors.
- **Advance the Global Compact for Eye Health**
Position the Compact as a framework to align stakeholders, support commitments, and strengthen accountability ahead of the Global Summit.

Background:

The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is the United Nations' central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, bringing together Member States and stakeholders to assess progress and accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. As countries increasingly prioritize cross-cutting drivers of development, including eye health, the HLPF provides a critical space to advance integrated, multisector solutions and strengthen means of implementation under SDG 17.

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are the primary mechanism through which Member States report on SDG implementation. General Assembly resolution [A/RES/75/310 Vision for Everyone](#) explicitly encourages the inclusion of eye health in VNRs, recognizing vision as a cross-cutting development issue. This is increasingly reflected in practice: approximately 40 percent of 2025 VNRs referenced eye health, a threefold increase since 2016, demonstrating both growing recognition and the feasibility of integration within national reporting frameworks.

This growing recognition reflects the broader development impact of eye health. Improving eye health delivers benefits across health, education, gender equality, decent work, and economic growth. At least 1.1 billion people live with avoidable sight loss, and over 2.2 billion people globally experience vision impairment, undermining educational attainment, workforce participation, and productivity. While eye health is not captured by a standalone SDG indicator, existing UN and WHO frameworks provide recognized indicators and data sources to support monitoring, including those linked to Universal Health Coverage.

The need for integrated action is particularly evident in road safety. Each year, 1.3 million people die, and approximately 50 million are injured in road traffic crashes, yet vision impairment remains largely overlooked. Poor vision increases crash risk by nearly 50%, and drivers with cataracts are 2.5 times more likely to be involved in at-fault crashes. In many LMICs, between 10% and 85% of drivers are licensed without basic vision testing. Integrating eye health into road safety strategies offers a cost-effective intervention, with the potential to reduce injuries by over 200,000 by the end of the Decade of Action and up to 1.2 million annually beyond 2030.

In this context, the [Global Summit for Eye Health](#), to be held on 2 November 2026 in Antigua and Barbuda, marks five years since the adoption of resolution 75/310 and provides an opportunity to translate political momentum into coordinated action. The Summit will catalyze a new wave of national and institutional commitments aligned with the Act, Allocate, Accelerate framework, focusing on policy integration, financing, and scaled implementation. Voluntary National Reviews are expected to play a central role in tracking these commitments, providing an established mechanism for transparency and accountability.

The Global Compact for Eye Health will serve as the unifying, multi-stakeholder policy framework underpinning these efforts. Led by the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, with technical support from the WHO and partners, the Compact will align stakeholders around shared priorities, guide investment and partnerships, and embed accountability within existing processes. Together, the Compact and Summit commitments provide a pathway from fragmented efforts to coordinated delivery, supporting universal access to eye health and accelerating progress toward the SDGs.

Programme

Time	Subject	Speaker(s)
Part I: Opening		
Frame the challenge of coordinated SDG delivery, emphasizing partnerships under SDG 17, road safety under SDG 11 as a practical example of integration, and the Global Summit for Eye Health as an opportunity to advance coordinated action and shared accountability.		
1:15 – 1:35	Welcome Introduction, objectives, and programme outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Fergal Mythen (Moderator) Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN
	Co-Hosts Addresses <i>Reflect on progress since the adoption of Vision for Everyone and the leadership and collaboration needed to accelerate implementation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Walton Webson Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the UN • H.E. Mr. Salahuddin Noman Chowdhury Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN
1:35 – 1:40	Keynote Speaker <i>Eye health as a model for coordinated SDG delivery and a catalyst for collective action.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD (UN-OHRLLS, Special Envoy Road Safety)
Part II: From Fragmentation to Integration		
Examine how integrated approaches can strengthen implementation of the 2030 Agenda, using road safety and eye health to identify practical pathways for coordination, partnership, and delivery.		
1:40 – 2:05	From Fragmentation to Integration: Road Safety as a Case Study in Coordinated Action <i>An expert-level discussion examining the role of eye health in road safety and the lessons it offers for coordinated delivery across the SDGs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Harish Parvathaneni Permanent Representative of India to the UN • Mr. Werner Obermeyer Director of the WHO at UNHQ • Ms. Kathleen Sherwin President and CEO of Orbis International • UN Women (TBD)
Part III: Act, Allocate, Accelerate		
Building on the lessons of coordinated implementation, this discussion will explore how the Global Summit for Eye Health and Global Compact for Eye Health can strengthen alignment, mobilize commitments, and accelerate collective action toward Vision for Everyone.		
2:05 - 2:25	Act, Allocate, Accelerate: A Call to Action <i>A high-level call to action supporting the Global Summit for Eye Health and Global Compact for Eye Health as platforms for collaboration, accountability, and action.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Cornel Feruță Permanent Representative of Romania to the UN • Champion Member States • H.E. Ms. Keisha A. McGuire Chief Global Affairs Officer, RestoringVision, former Permanent Representative of Grenada to the UN
2:25 – 2:30	Concluding Remarks & Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Salahuddin Noman Chowdhury Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN