



PRESS RELEASE

Carter Center, Lions Clubs International Foundation Announce Expanded Partnership to Pursue Elimination of Blinding Trachoma and River Blindness in Four African Countries



Photo courtesy of The Carter Center/D. Hakes

OAK BROOK, Illinois, USA, May 15, 2014 – During a ceremony held at the Carter Center’s headquarters on May 15, 2014, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Lions Clubs International Foundation Chairperson Wayne Madden announced a US\$8.8 million expansion of the Lions-Carter Center SightFirst Initiative to end suffering from major causes of preventable blindness in Ethiopia, Uganda, Mali, and Niger.

“For 20 years, the partnership with Lions Clubs International Foundation has been instrumental in supporting the Carter Center’s leadership in the fight against neglected diseases,” said President Carter. “The Lions’ continued financial support will help The Carter Center, local Lions clubs, and other national partners defeat preventable blindness in some of the most affected communities in the world.”

The Carter Center and Lions Clubs International Foundation partnership, called the Lions-Carter Center SightFirst Initiative, was established in 1999. The funding announcement comes at a critical juncture as Carter Center-supported efforts against trachoma and river blindness are reaching major milestones and scaling up to achieve new goals.

Mali and Niger are making progress in eliminating blinding trachoma by 2015. Significant efforts to eliminate trachoma from the Amhara Region of Ethiopia, the most highly endemic region of the world, are generating promising results. In addition, the Center has changed its approach to river blindness in Africa—no longer simply working to control the disease, but seeking to assist ministries of health to eliminate the disease from the areas where the Center works.



PRESS RELEASE

“Lions have a long history of preserving sight, so it’s an honor to work with The Carter Center and our fellow Lion, President Carter, to help eliminate river blindness and blinding trachoma in African nations where we’re needed most,” said Lions Clubs International Foundation Chairperson Wayne Madden. “Together, we are working toward a future free from the unnecessary suffering caused by river blindness and trachoma.”

Local Lions clubs will help mobilize impacted communities to participate in mass drug administration, eyelid surgery campaigns, health education, and latrine construction. Lions also will serve as community advocates by working with local leaders to increase participation in activities related to river blindness and trachoma in their communities. Since 1994, Lions Clubs International Foundation has awarded US\$42 million in grants to The Carter Center.

President Carter’s Lions Clubs History

President Carter has been a Lion for 61 years, since his return to Plains, Georgia, after a career in the Navy as a submariner. Beginning with small service projects like giving blood and collecting eyeglasses, President Carter took on additional leadership roles in the association and was elected district governor and later chairperson of all district governors in Georgia in 1968.

“Through my involvement in Lions, I received a greater awareness of the outside world and of the many opportunities that exist to serve other people,” said President Carter. “These experiences led me to go into politics and to establish The Carter Center after I left the White House.”

Read more about President Carter and the Lions-Carter Center partnership in LION Magazine.

###

The Carter Center

"Waging Peace. Fighting Disease. Building Hope." A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization, The Carter Center has helped to improve life for people in more than 70 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; and improving mental health care. The Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide. Please visit www.cartercenter.org to learn more about The Carter Center.



Lions Clubs International **FOUNDATION**

PRESS RELEASE

Lions Clubs International Foundation

Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) is the charitable arm of Lions Clubs International, the world's largest service club organization with more than 1.35 million members in 208 countries and geographical areas around the world. Established in 1968, LCIF has been preventing avoidable blindness on a global scale for more than 20 years through the SightFirst program. Lions are investing US\$415 million in SightFirst and have helped to restore sight to millions worldwide. Learn more at lcif.org.

WE CARE. WE SERVE. WE ACCOMPLISH.

300 W 22ND STREET • OAK BROOK ILLINOIS 60523-8842 USA • 630.571.5466 • WWW.LCIF.ORG