

## Partnership to End Blinding Trachoma: The International Trachoma Initiative (ITI)

**Program Goal:** Pfizer is working to help end the suffering and the cycle of poverty caused by blinding trachoma by partnering with the World Health Organization's (WHO) Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma by the year 2020 (GET2020), the International Trachoma Initiative (ITI) and others. Trachoma is treatable and preventable with full implementation of the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended **SAFE** strategy for trachoma control (**S**urgery; **A**ntibiotics—using donated Zithromax®; **F**acial cleanliness; and **E**nvironmental improvement) in affected communities. Pfizer donates the Zithromax® needed to implement the SAFE strategy and reach the goal of elimination.

**Health Challenge:** Trachoma is an infectious eye disease spread by contact with an infected person's hands or clothing. It is the world's leading cause of preventable blindness. About 41 million people, mostly women and children, in 57 endemic countries have active trachoma infection and need treatment. Another 8.2 million people are estimated to have an advanced stage of the disease, called trichiasis, in which the eyelashes turn inward and scrape the cornea. People with trichiasis face the risk of visual impairment or blindness unless treated with antibiotics and a simple surgical procedure.

The poorest of the poor suffer most from trachoma, particularly those with limited access to water and sanitation. Because trachoma is transmitted through close personal contact, it tends to occur in clusters—often infecting entire families and communities. Globally, 1.2 billion people live in trachoma-endemic areas.

In 1998, Pfizer and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation co-established the ITI, an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of blinding trachoma. Housed at The Task Force for Global Health, ITI manages Pfizer's global donation of the antibiotic Zithromax® and collaborates with governmental and nongovernmental agencies at the local, national and international levels to implement the SAFE strategy. Pfizer also funds a significant portion of ITI's activities worldwide.

### Successes:

- To date, Pfizer has donated more than 238 million Zithromax® treatments with an estimated total value of \$5.3 billion USD to people in 21 countries.
- Morocco became the first country to reach its trachoma elimination goals and awaits WHO certification that blinding trachoma has been eliminated as a public health problem.
- Three countries in which ITI works are on track to eliminate blinding trachoma: The Gambia, Ghana and Vietnam.

**Partners:** Governments, nongovernmental organizations, corporations, U.N. agencies, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Carter Center, CBM, Helen Keller International, Lions Clubs International, Sight Savers International, the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, World Health Organization, and others.

### Target Areas:



Visit [www.trachoma.org](http://www.trachoma.org) and [www.pfizerglobalhealth.com](http://www.pfizerglobalhealth.com) to learn more about the ITI and to download brochures, annual reports, newsletters, photos and stories about people making a difference in the field.