

# ACTION FOR HEARING LOSS

*Make a Sound Investment*



# Need for action on hearing loss

Unaddressed hearing loss poses a high cost for the economy globally.



**\$750**  
billion<sup>1</sup>  
annually



Annual **cost** of hearing loss<sup>1</sup>



Annual combined health **expenditure** of Brazil and China<sup>2</sup>



**GDP** of the Netherlands<sup>2</sup>

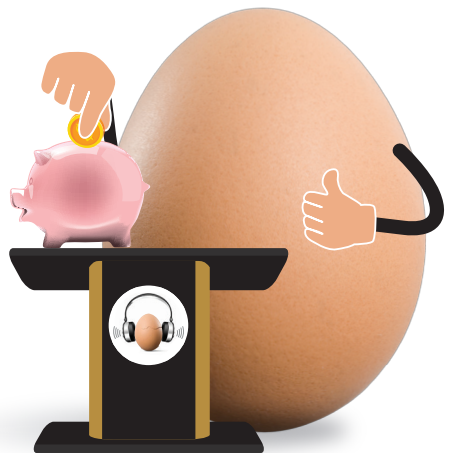
<sup>1</sup> WHO estimates 2016, cost in International dollars

<sup>2</sup> In US dollars, source: World Bank report, 2015

# Recommended actions

Decision-makers can address hearing loss by:

- Allocating suitable resources
- Integrating ear and hearing care into health systems
- Building human resource capacity
- Implementing early identification and intervention programmes
- Increasing awareness among all sectors of society



# Inaction comes at a high cost<sup>1</sup>

Annually, unaddressed significant hearing loss<sup>3</sup> results in:



Health care system cost, other than the cost of hearing devices:

**\$67–107 billion**

Loss of productivity, due to unemployment and premature retirement:

**\$105 billion**



Societal cost, as a result of social isolation, communication difficulties and stigma:

**\$573 billion**

Cost of additional educational support to children with hearing loss aged 5–14 years:

**\$3.9 billion**



*“Persons with significant hearing loss are twice as likely to be unemployed as hearing persons in Europe.”*

*(Shield, 2006)*

*“People with untreated hearing loss earn 50–70% less in the United States.”*

*(Monteiro et al, 2012)*

*“Hearing loss related unemployment costs the UK economy an estimated £24.8 billion per annum.”*

*(UK Commission on hearing loss 2014)*

<sup>1</sup> WHO estimates 2016, cost in International dollars

<sup>3</sup> greater than 50dB hearing threshold in better hearing ear

# Action is **cost-effective**

Evidence shows that it is cost effective to:



Prevent hearing loss by:

- Protecting against loud sounds
- Identifying and treating otitis media (ear infections)

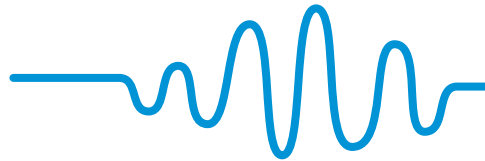


Identify hearing loss early through screening of:

- newborns
- school children
- adults above 50 years



Provide rehabilitation together with support for continuous use of hearing aids



Improve access to cochlear implants

Captioning and sign language interpretation are effective in making information accessible to deaf and hard of hearing people.



# Action benefits individuals

Interventions have a real impact:



*'Every day that goes by I thank God for the wonderful doctors who diagnosed my child's hearing loss soon after he was born. I am ever so grateful for the great invention of cochlear implant, a miracle that has allowed my son to hear the world.'*

Mother of Godrey, Russian Federation



*'As a child with no language, I often felt agitated, fearful and totally isolated. I had my first experience with sign language at the age of nine and it completely transformed my life. Now, I feel confident, complete and proud to have a language of my own!'*

Halima, Uganda



*'Hearing aids have allowed me to re-enjoy life. I can enjoy music, I can speak with my children and family. I feel like all the colours have come back into my life.'*

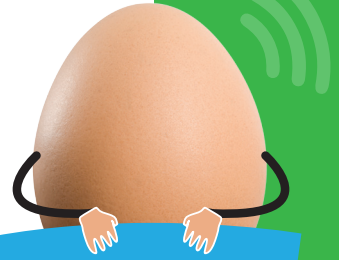
Javier, Guatemala



*'Captioning is a cost-effective and universal means of communication. As I am hearing impaired, captioning allows me to participate in meetings and discussions. It is also beneficial for those who can't hear well in a noisy environment.'*

Tuya, Mongolia

# Action benefits society and countries



Interventions to address hearing loss result in:



Financial savings and significant return on investment



Increased access to education



Greater employability and earnings which benefits the economy



Lower costs related to depression and cognitive decline



An integrated society

*'In 2009 the Government of Philippines passed a legislation that has made universal newborn hearing screening mandatory across the country. This has resulted in a saving of 1.4 million pesos for each hearing impaired child receiving early intervention.'*

Charlotte Chiong, Philippines

*"Cochlear implantation not only improves quality of life but also translates into significant economic benefits for patients and the Canadian economy."*

(Monteiro et al, 2012)

*"Cochlear implants significantly increase the quality of life of hearing impaired children in India."*

(Drennan et al 2015)

*"In the United States, for each dollar invested to treat a hearing impaired child with cochlear implants, there is a return on the investment of US\$ 2.07."*

(Penaranda et al 2012)

*Hearing aids have allowed me to re-enjoy life*

*Captioning allows me to participate in meetings and discussions*

*My hearing loss could have been prevented had I simply turned down the volume*

*A cochlear implant has allowed my son to hear the world*

*Learning sign language has made me feel confident and complete*



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Detailed report can be accessed at:  
[www.who.int/pbd/deafness/world-hearing-day/2017/en](http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/world-hearing-day/2017/en)