

Policy influencing 2025 annual summary

Key achievements in influencing policy relating to eye health, refractive error and neglected tropical diseases

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Introduction

This report is a summary of the key successes in policy influencing achieved across Sightsavers' country offices in 2025 which relate to the thematic areas of eye health, refractive error, neglected tropical diseases and sexual and reproductive health rights, with support from the Policy and Global Advocacy team, Campaigns team, Global Technical Leads and other teams. The report aims to provide an overview of the most significant achievements, although it is not exhaustive and there are many other examples of progress made towards Sightsavers' health policy influencing goals which have not been included in the interests of keeping the summary at a manageable length. Sightsavers recognises that policy change requires long-term investment from multiple actors including government, civil society and international NGO partners, and it is important to note that these achievements are not solely attributed to the input of Sightsavers. For a comprehensive overview of Sightsavers' work on policy influencing please refer to the [Policy influencing data hub](#).

Key achievements

- Validation of the eye health strategic plan in Cameroon
- Integration of the World Health Organisation guide for action into the health policy in Côte d'Ivoire
- Integration of eye health into the National Road Safety Policy in India
- Development and implementation of trachoma transition plans in Kenya
- Revision to the law on sexual and reproductive health rights to integrate provisions for persons with disabilities in Mali
- Validation of the national strategy for sexual and reproductive health rights in Nigeria
- Endorsement of the first diploma level dispensing opticianry course in Pakistan
- Development and implementation of the national eye care strategy in Tanzania

Bangladesh

Integration of disability inclusion into comprehensive district eye care planning

In 2025, Sightsavers supported district level eye care planning processes, focusing on the 17 programme districts. The plans cover district and sub-district level population, poverty levels, availability of eye care services, accessibility for persons with disabilities to eye care

services, as well as prevalence of cataract, refractive error, presbyopia, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. In 2025, Sightsavers organised two partner meetings, to share technical expertise on disability inclusion, as well as best practices from the WHO Integrated People-Centered Eye Care framework. Based on this information, comprehensive plans have been developed to provide eye health services. District eye care plans have been shared with respective health authorities. The political context in 2025 was challenging, with a transition government in place and a lack of focus on long-term development planning, but Sightsavers will continue its engagement in 2026, to advocate for the establishment of district level disability committees.

Cameroon

Validation of the eye health strategic plan

The eye health strategic plan was validated in 2025. Sightsavers provided both technical and financial support to the process of the development and validation of the Eye Health Strategic Plan. The new revised Eye health strategic plan was developed in alignment with the national priorities, global commitments and orientation from the World Health Organisation and International Agency for the prevention of Blindness.

Côte d'Ivoire

Integration of the World Health Organisation guide for action into the health policy

In 2025, the 2026 - 2030 National Action Plan for Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities was given technical approval and now complies with the guidelines of the WHO Guide for Action. This milestone makes Côte d'Ivoire the first country in the world (out of the 10 that are implementing the Guide for Action) to have integrated its principles into health policy. Sightsavers played a catalytic role in this process, providing training and technical assistance, and facilitating the engagement between the WHO and Ministry of Health.

India

Integration of eye health into the National Road Safety Policy

In 2025, Sightsavers engaged with partner organisations through the annual Vision and Road Safety conference, bringing together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders from the road safety and eye health sectors to deliberate on the critical role of clear vision in ensuring safer roads. The conference reinforced the recognition of eye health as the fifth 'E' of road safety alongside Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Emergency Medical Services, calling for its systematic integration into road safety policies through mandatory vision

screening for commercial drivers, alignment with UN Global Plan Pillar 3 and SPECS 2030, and evidence-based standards to reduce vision-related road traffic injuries. The initiative has moved vision and road safety into an institutionalised, multi-stakeholder policy space, demonstrated by political endorsement at the ministerial level, formal engagement with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Road Safety Task Force, and commitments to vision integrated road safety planning and public-private partnerships to scale vision screening, enforcement and access to affordable spectacles for occupational workers in the national economy.

Development and implementation of the National Eye Health Action Plan

In 2025, Sightsavers India's advocacy translated into key policy shifts, elevating glaucoma and avoidable blindness as public health priorities within the National Eye Health Action Plan, safeguarding affordable access to refractive error services, and advancing a National Eye Health Action Plan aligned with WHO global indicators for government implementation. These institutional changes have driven system-wide impact, enabling the scale-up of evidence-based models through government adoption and contributing to measurable national gains, including a 10% increase in cataract surgeries to 9.8 million and a rise in India's cataract surgical rate to 6,911.

Kenya

Development and implementation of trachoma transition plans

In 2025, Sightsavers continued to advocate for the development and implementation of trachoma transition plans. Over the past years, 12 councils have developed trachoma transition plans, and in 2025, Sightsavers supported 1 additional council in developing a transition plan. Transition plans set out governmental commitments to resources for NTD elimination, providing a useful entry point for Sightsavers and partners to advocate for investment in water, hygiene and infrastructure, and full implementation of the S-A-F-E (Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial Cleanliness, Environmental Improvements) strategy at county level. This includes access to trachoma diagnosis, management of incident trachoma trichiasis (TT) cases by certified TT surgeons, procurement of generic azithromycin and continuous reporting of trachoma cases management information system. To enable the collection and reporting of NTD data, more than 1,500 Community Health Promoters (CHPs) were trained on the DHIS-2 platform between 2024 and 2025.

Liberia

Establishment of a committee for coordinating activities for the elimination of NTDs

In 2024, Sightsavers supported the establishment of a committee for coordinating activities for the elimination of onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis. In 2025, the first cross-border meeting was held with representatives from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, promoting synchronised MDA and sharing of data. In a region where the effectiveness of NTD activities inevitably has to involve collaboration between countries, this is an important step forward in coordinating an international response.

Establishment of county eye health steering committees

In 2025, Sightsavers supported the Ministry of Health in establishing three additional county-level eye health steering committees in Liberia. The committees are keen to advocate and engage with relevant bodies at the county and district levels to influence local eye health resource mobilisation, and this involves discussion around health financing. To strengthen the new committees, Sightsavers supported the dissemination of the National Eye Health Policy, launched in 2023. This will help to ensure that discussions on eye health at each of these levels are guided by the policy.

Mali

Development of national, regional and local eye health plans

In 2025, Sightsavers continued to engage with the Ministry of Health to advocate for the development of the new national strategic plan for eye health. To this end, Sightsavers facilitated a workshop to review the previous plan and define the next steps, including the recruitment of a consultant to draft the document, progress sessions to validate the various drafts, and a technical and political validation workshop to finalise the process, scheduled for 2026. Sightsavers continued its advocacy work to support the regional authorities of the project's three intervention regions—Sikasso, Segou, and Koulikoro—in developing and implementing their strategic plans for eye health. The regional plans for Sikasso and Segou have already been validated, and the plan for Koulikoro has been developed, pending validation at the regional level, due to take place in 2026. Beyond this, Sightsavers conducted advocacy at the local level with the authorities of Markala, in the region of Segou, for the operationalisation of the optical unit and the integration of eye health into their Local Development Plan. Finally, Sightsavers advocated for the integration of eye health and disability inclusion into the new Ten-Year Health and Social Development Plan (PDDSS 2026-2035), providing both technical and financial assistance.

Revision to the law on sexual and reproductive health rights to integrate provisions for persons with disabilities

In 2025, as part of the implementation of the WISH2 WACA project, Sightsavers carried out a series of advocacy activities, providing support and technical assistance to both government and civil society partners, which led to the revision of the law on sexual and reproductive health rights in Mali, to integrate provisions for persons with disabilities. This demonstrates Sightsavers' growing leadership on this issue in Mali.

Nigeria

Validation of the national strategy for sexual and reproductive health rights

In 2025, the Federal Ministry of Health reviewed and validated the national strategy for the sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) of vulnerable people and persons with disabilities. Sightsavers technical assistance in this process, and facilitated the engagement of OPDs. In 2024, Sightsavers supported the domestication and dissemination of the SRHR policy in Kaduna state. Looking ahead to 2026, Sightsavers will continue its advocacy work to promote the domestication of the national SRHR policy in other states.

Domestication of the national eye health policy in Plateau State

In 2025, the commissioner for Health of Plateau State signed the state eye health policy, to domesticate the national eye health policy. A dedicated eye health budget line was introduced in Plateau state, with some level of funding to cover leadership and governance meetings and awareness creation activities. Two additional eye health professionals were employed to increase capacity, and a retired ophthalmologist was taken on as a consultant. Beyond this, Sightsavers engaged with ministries of health in the states of Sokoto, Zamfara and Kaduna, to begin discussions on how the national eye health policy could be domesticated. Sightsavers will continue to take this forward in 2026.

Pakistan

Incorporation of eye health indicators into the HMIS in Sindh and Punjab

After rigorous and sustained advocacy efforts led by Sightsavers, two new eye health indicators have now been successfully integrated into the District Health Information Software 2 (DHIS2) system in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab. This significant milestone marks a major step forward in institutionalising eye health data within government systems. The two indicators (number of refractive errors diagnosed and number of patients referred

for glasses) will be reported on a daily basis. The data collected will be disaggregated by age and gender, providing greater visibility into service delivery and access across population groups. While the current indicators do not yet include detailed classifications of refractive errors, this development still represents a critical foundation for more comprehensive data collection in the future. The inclusion of these indicators allows for more systematic tracking of refractive error and optical-related conditions and will help estimate the need for government investment.

Endorsement of the first diploma level dispensing opticianry course

In collaboration with the National Committee for Eye Health and the College of Ophthalmology and Allied Vision Sciences (COAVS), Sightsavers developed a two-year opticianry course in 2023. The course was approved by the relevant regulatory body, in this case the Punjab Medical Faculty. This course is the first-ever diploma programme in opticianry Pakistan, which will produce a skilled workforce of opticians and was formally launched in 2024. In 2025, Sightsavers continued to engage with the Punjab Medical Faculty, to enable an increase in enrolment for 2025 – 2027 intake. Beyond this, Sightsavers initiated the process of registering the course with the Allied Health Professional Council, and secured its endorsement. This registration will not only enable the accreditation process at national level but also will pave the way for other public and private institutes to adopt this course as a regular programme.

Sierra Leone

Integration of eye health into district health plans

As part of its efforts to promote the sustainable financing of eye health and the representation of persons with disabilities in the delivery of eye health services, Sightsavers has supported the strengthening of district eye health committees. Persons with disabilities are playing a role in the allocation of resources for eye health through their representation and participation in these eye health committees. In 2025, eye health was incorporated into all local council and district health plans, facilitated by the various district eye health committees.

Tanzania

Development and implementation of the national eye care strategy

Tanzania made substantial progress in strengthening the policy environment for eye health through the development and launch of the National Eye Health Strategic Plan (NEHSP) IV 2024–2026, which was officially completed and launched in mid-2025. The new plan was developed following an evaluation of NEHSP III (2018–2022) and addresses gaps in

leadership, financing, data systems, service delivery, and human resources in the eye health sector. The plan aligns with national health sector reforms and global eye health targets, providing a clear framework for implementation across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of care. Sightsavers was involved throughout the development process, providing technical and financial support. Sightsavers played a central role in convening national advocacy and planning meetings, providing evidence from regional budget analyses, and supporting government stakeholders to recognise persistent gaps in funding, supply chain systems, and primary eye care integration.

Integration of NTDs within Council Comprehensive Health Plans

Progress was made towards integrating Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) into district health planning and budgeting. The Ministry of Health, together with the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG), issued a circular directing districts to allocate specific funding for NTD interventions, especially in areas where these diseases are most prevalent. This is a significant achievement as it embeds NTD services into district health budgets, paving the way for sustainable financing and stronger service delivery. Sightsavers contributed by supporting partners' planning sessions with district NTD coordinators, helping them understand budgeting processes and identify opportunities to cover NTDs within the Council Comprehensive Health Plans (CCHP). In 2026, the focus will be on monitoring how districts implement the circular and continuing advocacy to ensure NTDs remain a priority in both district and national health strategies.