



**Report on the Inaugural Ceremony of
Comprehensive Eye Care Program
A Joint Venture of University of Lahore and AI Baseer Foundation
At University of Lahore (UOL) Teaching Hospital, Lahore
Wednesday 25th October, 2017**

The Inaugural Ceremony commenced with the recitation of Holy verses of Quran and Naat (Praise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad S.A.W) by the selected students.

Prof. Awais Rauf, Chairman University Of Lahore and Comprehensive Eye Care Program (CECP) formally welcomed all the participants (dignitaries, colleagues, students and other participants from various organizations) and warmly thanked the Chief Guest, Prof. Asad Aslam (SI), to attend the ceremony. He appreciated the work done by Comprehensive Eye Care (CEC) Cell in Punjab under the leadership of Prof. Asad Aslam which is an inspiration for all the eye health organizations working in the country. He shared that the dream of establishing center of excellence in University of Lahore (UOL) had been in his mind for many years and finally it has now come true and being practically implemented through Comprehensive Eye Care Program (CECP) with the efforts of Professor Dr. Durraiz, CEO, CECP and Dr. Muhammad Khizar Bashir, Program Director CECP and CEO, AI - Baseer Foundation. He also thanked other key stakeholders involved in the program included Taleem Foundation, Akhuwat Foundation, CEC Cell and child heart foundation.

Prof. Durraiz Rehman, Chief Executive Officer CECP cordially thanked the Chief Guest, Prof Asad Aslam for attending the ceremony and giving his valuable time. He valued that under the leadership of Prof Asad Aslam, the services (Provision of comprehensive eye care services and developing Mid-Level Eye Care Personnel) of Comprehensive Eye Care Cell, Punjab and College of Ophthalmology and Allied Vision Sciences (COAVS) is remarkable and role model for all of us. He emphasized on the significance of mid-level eye care personnel and remarked them as the backbone in the field of ophthalmology.

Regarding CECP, he discussed about the whole idea of upgradation of teaching hospital, University of Lahore to the level of center of excellence which mainly included establishment of pediatric ophthalmology department, Vitro retinal clinic (DR services), glaucoma clinic, low vision clinic, diagnostics & corneal bank. Human Resource Development and outreach activities are also the key components of the program. He also mentioned that through CECP program, initiatives have also been taken abroad in Africa where more than 10,000 patients have been examined and 1376 have been operated for cataracts till date and more is planned by the end of December.

He thanked all the Heads of Departments of UOLs, whole CECP team, colleagues, students and other participants for their contributions in successful initiation of program activities and also for successful inauguration ceremony.

Dr. Muhammad Khizar Bashir, Program Director CECP and CEO AI Baseer Foundation shared the latest data on global burden of blindness and drew attention of key stakeholders and participants to the need and demand side of eye care services with the backlog of untreated eye diseases nationally and globally. He mentioned that CECP will contribute in reducing the burden of blindness and will promote inclusion in the district by developing liaison with public sector and other International and National Non-Governmental Organizations. Being the CEO of AI Baseer Foundation, he also shared activities and achievements of AI Baseer foundation which included on-going projects, OPD and surgeries' statistics with future projections.

A skit performance by the selected optometry students of University of Lahore was presented in which they highlighted the provision of subsidized eye care services through 'Comprehensive Eye Care Program, referral mechanisms and shared eye health awareness messages on cataract, squint and uncorrected refractive errors.

The Chief Guest – Prof. Asad Aslam (SI), National coordinator and Chairman National Committee for eye health Pakistan congratulated University Of Lahore (UOL) and all Comprehensive Eye Care Program team (Patron in Chief CECP, Chairman CECP and University of Lahore, CEO, CECP, Program Director, CECP and whole team) for taking such a marvelous step for the provision of comprehensive eye care services in Lahore district..

He endorsed that the government cannot achieve its ultimate target for prevention of blindness without the involvement of private sector as there is a tremendous increase in population couple with other issues which include lack of eye care facilities and high backlog of untreated eye diseases. He shared the situational analysis of the services in Punjab earlier in 1999 that when they started, there were insufficient facilities with no trained Human Resource available. Most of the cataract operations were being operated without IOL implantation. To improve the situation and reduce the burden of avoidable blindness in the country, Government of Punjab focused mainly on three areas included Human Resource Development, upgradation of the facilities through advanced technology (with the support of different NGOs and INGOs) and service delivery. Now the result is that Punjab has upgraded all DHQs and Teaching Hospitals where people are getting comprehensive eye care services free of cost, 13 vitreo retinal centers have been established across Pakistan and trained Human Resources in the field of ophthalmology are available and being recruited successfully.

Recommendation by the Chief Guest - "Identification of gaps is one of the key factors in successful execution of any program and avoid duplication of services", Prof. Asad Aslam.

He further said that identifying gaps is also helpful in catering both demand and supply sides of the problems in any program. Regarding CECP, he generously offered that COAVS and CECP team can identify gaps together in the district and also offered the



support of Human Resource from the college, if required. He concluded his speech by remarkable



words, **"We should all make efforts and work together to relief patients in agony."**

Mr. MA Rauf, Patron-in Chief CECP said closing remarks in his very polite way, and encouraged all the participants to continue their efforts for the reduction of avoidable blindness and serve humanity. In the end, all dignitaries, whole CECP team along with the Chief Guest gathered to have a ribbon cutting ceremony and prayed for the successful implementation of the program activities with long term results for the benefit of the people of Pakistan.