

Commonwealth Future Luncheon: 2020 Vision

‘Don’t turn a blind eye to the importance of correctable vision’

A Luncheon event held in Knightsbridge on 12th March 2020 has inspired and mobilised an active task force to help make poor vision a thing of the past across the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Future, a non-party political organisation that promotes cohesion throughout the 54 Commonwealth countries, hosted the evening event. Part of its agenda is to create a prosperous society for all, and in this seminal 2020 year, the organisation’s focus is to stop poor vision being a barrier to individuals reaching – and exceeding – their full potential.

At the organisation’s helm is the Chair, Dr Sivardeen, an Optometrist, has seen first-hand how access to quality eye health advice and corrective vision is paramount, particularly to the younger generation.

Dr Sivardeen launched the Commonwealth Future’s focus on eye health for 2020: 2020 Vision promoting the importance of Optometry and correctable vision at an exclusive Luncheon. He urged that every citizen of the Commonwealth to have access to high-quality eye-care and intervention by eye care specialists. He announced the focus on eyecare education through reading in Ghana and Jamaica

At this prestigious venue a collective of like-minded individuals came together to hear from Rt Hon. Lord Michael Naseby PC, the Lord Sheikh and Professor John Marshall MBE. Mrs Marisa Jürgens, a diplomat from the South African High Commission, who has a condition called Stargardts Syndrome that results in blindness – also provided powerful insight to the afternoon talks, describing how technology has fulfilled her potential in spite of her sight loss conditions.

All the speakers emphasised the importance of optometry and correctable vision throughout society and endorsed this very important initiative.

This literacy backdrop to the evening – Prof John Marshall MBE, Frost Professor of Ophthalmology, University College London and Emeritus Professor of Ophthalmology at Kings College London was perfectly aligned to the Commonwealth Future’s eye-care education message. Topics debated included customer access to the latest advancements in eye health regardless of country of origin, how the Commonwealth can work together to impart their shared knowledge on best practice when it comes to corrective vision, and how all countries pool together their insights and emerging trends to ensure eye health gets the right attention it deserves.

The guests included H.E. Seth George Ramocan, High Commissioner to Jamaica, Mr. Samantha Pathirana, Deputy High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Prof. James Wolffsohn, Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor, Professor of Optometry, Life and Health Sciences, Aston University, Lt Col. Tim Petransky, Army Engagement Officer and Ms. Dorothy Ottey, actress and model.

The Commonwealth Future also networked at the evening to canvass views on its 2020 vision focus with attendees – all of which will be incorporated into their future 2020 Manifesto for Vision.