



MEDIA RELEASE

(26th September, 2025)

“UNGA80: Eye Health investment unlocks human capital”

New York, 24 September 2025 : “Investing in eye health is an investment in our human capital. It’s about ensuring that every Tongan, regardless of their visual ability, has the opportunity to contribute their skills, earn a decent living, and live with dignity,” said the Hon.Sinaitakala Tu’itahi, Minister for Internal Affairs.

On the margins of the 80th United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minister Gaston Browne of Antigua and Barbuda, alongside the UN Friends of Vision Group and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness , hosted The Value of Vision: The Case for Investment, a high-level side event spotlighting eye health as a catalytic, cross-sector investment for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Today, the Hon.Sinaitakala Tu’itahi, Minister for Internal Affairs of the Kingdom delivered remarks emphasising how eye health unlocks human capital by enabling inclusive labour markets, reducing employment barriers, and supporting decent work, while showcasing government and partner initiatives that integrate vision care into workforce and social protection systems.

She highlighted how the newly launched Tonga National Policy on Disability Inclusive Development 2025-2035 prioritises employment and livelihoods for persons with disabilities, the work of the Ministry of Health in addressing diabetic eye health and the tireless efforts of the Tonga National Visual Impairment Association to foster a barrier-free, inclusive society. The panel featured representatives from the governments of Croatia, Nepal, Saudi Arabia as well as UN Women and the International Labour Organisation.

The event highlighted the transformative impact of eye health investment across the human lifespan, provided a preview of new research from the upcoming publication, The Case for Investment in Eye Health, and brought together leaders, government civil society organisations, and development partners to examine how eye health strengthens health systems, improves learning outcomes, and increases workforce productivity.

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