

# HAITI

*An Opportunity to Improve the Health of Communities, Women, and Children in the Americas*

## **PARTNERSHIP TO ELIMINATE TRACHOMA AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM**

### **Haiti joins regional efforts to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem**

Trachoma is the leading cause of infectious blindness worldwide, disproportionately affecting people living in vulnerable conditions, especially women and children.

In the Americas, Mexico eliminated trachoma in 2017, while Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, and Peru have approximately 5.6 million people at risk of this disease.

As part of the initiative to declare the Americas free of trachoma, actions have been initiated to determine if there are additional affected populations beyond the mentioned countries. Haiti is one of the countries where rapid assessments will be conducted in prioritized communities.

This initiative is aligned with PAHO's initiative for the elimination of communicable diseases and related conditions, which aims to eliminate more than 30 diseases by 2030, with a common, integrated, and sustainable approach, promoting linkages and synergies, within the health system and with other sectors.



## What is ocular trachoma?

Ocular trachoma is an eye infection transmitted by direct contact with people infected with *Chlamydia trachomatis* bacteria.



Recurrent infections in children living in communities with poor access to health services, water, and basic sanitation can lead to **chronic damage**, such as the eyelashes turning inwards. This causes pain and, if left untreated, can lead to visual impairment and blindness in adulthood.

## What actions will be taken in Haiti to accelerate efforts to eliminate trachoma?

Through the partnership and collaboration between the Ministry of Public Health and Population of Haiti, the Government of Canada, and the Pan American Health Organization, the following actions will be undertaken over a five-year period starting in 2023:

- Trachoma surveillance actions in communities suspected of having this disease as a public health problem. Trachoma surveillance will also be used to monitor other diseases such as skin-related neglected tropical diseases in vulnerable populations.
- Identify, agree upon, adapt, and implement actions to prevent neglected infectious diseases to contribute to their control and elimination.

## What results are expected from the alliance?

Confirm the presence or absence of trachoma in the prioritized communities. This evidence will enable the country to determine the actions to be implemented.

Identify skin-related neglected tropical diseases affecting the population in communities where trachoma surveillance will be conducted.

Implement integrated actions to prevent the occurrence of neglected infectious diseases.

National and subnational capacities will have been strengthened to provide health services with a gender and intercultural approaches.



● Prioritized areas for trachoma assessments

