Concept note for side-event UN Transport Conference
- Submission

1. **Thematic session 1: Sustainable transport, poverty eradication, livelihoods and economic recovery**

2. **Potential Partners**
The submission is part of the project on 'RAAHI' - National Truckers Eye Health Programme. The core partners for this initiative are:
   - Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind (Sightsavers)
   - Vision 2020 India
   - Corporate Partners

3. **Title**
The Truckers Eye Health Programme in India and Sustainable Transport

**Background**

In 2015, Sightsavers initiated a pilot project to assess the situation of eye health amongst truck drivers in India. As the pilot expanded, it was learned that nearly 1 in 2 truck drivers had vision-related issues. Although the project was serving a large number of beneficiaries, it had several drawbacks, mainly due to the lack of information on the trucking community in the public sphere as well as the challenge of working with a migrant population. To further fill this information gap and mitigate the challenges Sightsavers in 2017 with the support of our valued corporate partners initiated a programme called 'RAAHI' - National Truckers Eye Health Programme. In Hindi, RAAHI means traveller. A large part of the life of a truck driver is spent on the roads while traveling, no matter their state of health or the weather conditions. Long trips are usual, and drivers work irregular shifts without resting on long hauls. Truck drivers are the backbone of the transport sector, but they are also one of the most marginalised and underprivileged sections. Their unorganised nature of work prohibits them to take their health issues seriously, especially eye health. Needless to mention that good vision is a critical component of safe driving. The risk of road accidents becomes very high if the driver has a visual impairment.

4. **Detailed description**
RAAHI aims to ensure road safety & enhance the quality of life through enabling clear eye vision among commercial drivers & allied workers. It aligns with Sustainable Development Goal target 3.6 and 11.2 i.e., halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents and provide access to safe transport systems for all, and improving road safety. This is done by adopting the 'Hub and Spoke Model' and implementing it near the locations which have a larger presence of truck drivers. During the project, it was identified that at any given point truck drivers are mostly present across the golden quadrilateral and North South-East West (NSEW) network along with 20 other high trucker density locations across the country. It was then decided to establish hubs (static centres) at these locations to target most of the truck drivers and reach out to the remaining ones in several high trucker concentration points by organising outreach camps that would be treated as spokes. All these hubs and spokes were then netted together as a network through a cloud-based system to ensure that drivers have easy access to eye care services at multiple locations basis their travel plan. Step by step, systems have been put in place to track spectacle compliance,
patients’ satisfaction, and outcomes. So far, more than 400,000 truckers and their helpers have been screened, and spectacles have been dispensed to 150,000 individuals (as of Jan 2021).

**Contribution to the Conference:** Ensuring a safe transport system is critical in achieving the SDGs. This event will promote the need for safe driving, and it also showcases that there is a high demand and uptake of eye health services among the trucker’s community. This will contribute to the overall learnings that emerge from the conference.

5. **Suggested format**

We would like to propose the format of the event to be five-minute presentations of each panelist. This will be followed by open debate and discussions with the Member States and the audience. Speakers would include programme implementors, corporate partners, Vision 2020 India, government representatives from the Ministry of Transport and Health.

6. **Possible speakers**
   - Sightsavers India
   - Stakeholders from Vision 2020 organisations
   - Corporate Partners
   - Truckers who have received services
   - Government representative from India

7. **Budget**
The side-event will be financed by Sightsavers.

8. **Equipment and services**
   - Zoom platform

9. **Contact information**

Prasannakumar PN, Director-Programmes, Sightsavers India [prasannakumar@sightsavers.org](mailto:prasannakumar@sightsavers.org)

Monu Ravindran, State Programme Lead – South India [Mravindran@sightsaversindia.in](mailto:Mravindran@sightsaversindia.in)