

EL SALVADOR

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

PARTNERSHIP TO ELIMINATE TRACHOMA AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

El Salvador joins regional efforts to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem

El Salvador will be searching for trachoma in prioritized communities as part of the regional initiative to eliminate this disease.

Trachoma is the leading cause of infectious blindness in the world. It affects people living in vulnerable conditions, especially women and children.

In the Americas, Mexico eliminated trachoma in 2017; in Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, and Peru, about 5.6 million people are at risk of the disease.

As part of the initiative to declare the Americas trachoma-free, actions have been initiated to determine whether more populations are affected by the disease beyond those countries. El Salvador is one of the countries where rapid assessments will be carried out to meet this objective.

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.



#EndTrachoma

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 El Salvador to step up efforts to eliminate trachoma?

Through collaboration between the Ministry of Health of El Salvador, the Government of Canada, and the Pan American Health Organization, trachoma surveillance will be carried out in communities living in conditions in which it is suspected that this disease could be a public health problem. Trachoma surveillance will be used to integrate actions and monitor other diseases of interest in the prioritized populations. Training sessions on trachoma will also be held for health personnel. These actions will continue for five years, starting in 2023.



What are the expected results of the partnership?

Confirm the presence or absence of trachoma in prioritized communities. Based on this evidence, it will be determined what actions need to be implemented.

Identify other diseases of public health interest that are affecting the communities where trachoma surveillance will be carried out.

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



● Prioritized areas for trachoma assessments

