



23<sup>rd</sup> August 2017

**Position Statement: Commodification and Profitization of human materials and ocular services**

We, as delegated representatives of the eye banking and ophthalmic communities, respect the generous spirit of eye donors and their families. For this reason, we do not support the:

1. commodification of substances of donated human origin
2. profitization and commercialisation of substances of donated human origin
3. the introduction of the profit motive to eye banking and cornea donation through for-profitization, partnerships or acquisition of eye banks and other sector providers by publicly listed entities
4. access to donors by entities involved in commodification, profiteering or commercialisation
5. notion that the rights of the vulnerable, dead, or dying can be exploited in the pursuit of medical therapies, services, research, and market expansion
6. notion that research, development, and economic growth are prioritised over the care and treatment of the dead and dying
7. Premise that the activities outlined above are inevitable or necessary steps for the care and advancement of global services for those with vision impairment.

As custodians of the gift of donation, and those involved in blindness prevention and treatment, we as delegated representatives of the eye banking and ophthalmic communities:

1. Call upon the broader vision, ophthalmology, transplant, research, civil societies, and manufacturing communities to:
  - a. ensure ethical principles, as established by the World Health Organization's Guiding Principles on Human Cell, Tissue, and Organ Transplantation (Resolution WHA63.22), remain central to all activities and advancements
  - b. protect the most vulnerable members of our communities
  - c. uphold the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights
  - d. Hold to account members of our sector involved in activities that contravene these principles or other applicable national and international laws and regulations
2. Encourage nation states and regions to strengthen their import and export laws to protect against biological risk or exploitation
3. Seek to strengthen sector harmonization, keep communication channels open, and work together as not-for-profit entities
4. Encourage issues, including breaches of these principles, to be reported to the Project Notify Library
5. Encourage members of the community to share their knowledge and insights freely for the shared benefit of all
6. Support those in economically less advantaged locations, and seek to protect them from bioethically compromised tissue trading and trafficking practices.

**About the Global Alliance of Eye Bank Associations.** GAEBEA is a member of the International Council of Ophthalmology, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, recognised by the Custodians of the Declaration of Istanbul on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism, and are guided by the WHO's *World Health Assembly Guiding Principles on Human Cell, Tissue and Organ Transplantation WHA63.22*. GAEBEA represent the Asian Eye Bank Association, Eye Bank Association of America, European Eye Bank Association, Eye Bank Association of India, Eye Bank Association of Australia and New Zealand and the Pan American Association of Eye Banks, and partners with other ophthalmology groups in regions without representation, who also seek to uphold these principles.