



PRESS RELEASE
Lagos, 10th March 2014

**FREE EYE EXAM FOR 236 CHILDREN
ON BOARD OF THE ITALIAN AIRCRAFT CARRIER ETNA**

Loving Gaze – an independent not-for-profit organization based in Lagos– thanks His Excellency the Ambassador of Italy in Nigeria - Flavio Rustico - and the Fondazione Francesca Rava - N.P.H. Italia Onlus - for the free eye exam provided to 236 unprivileged children from Lagos.

A team of Italian ophthalmologists and optometrists have examined 236 hundred students from St John and SS. Peter & Paul Creche, Nursery and Primary Schools on board of Etna, the Italian aircraft carrier, visiting Lagos port from February 28th till March 3rd.

The kids, between 6 and 12 years old, came from two unprivileged communities in Lagos: Ikorodu and Ikate Elegushi-Waterside. Local and distance sponsors support 60% of both schools' students. Loving Gaze manages both schools, along with two basic health care clinics (St Kizito Clinic) in both communities.

Dr Alda Gemmani, Medical Director says: "We praise *Transforming children's lives through sight* initiative. Most of our kids never had the chance to be examined by an ophthalmologist. We noticed that 15% of our students have some kind of eye conditions and we were able to assist most of them immediately. Thirty-six eye glasses have been distributed free of charge. They will improve the daily life of these children, having better relationship with others and the surrounding environment, allowing easier learning process and therefore improving their school results. We have also observed a worrying number of childhood glaucoma, which is a serious condition, uncommon among young patients. Two children would need a surgery to resolve their issue, we are now looking at the best option in Lagos to follow up these cases."

ABOUT LOVING GAZE

Loving Gaze is an independent not-for-profit organization, with 25 years of experience in Nigeria. We serve the unprivileged community in Lagos and Taraba State, through educational activities, basic health care service, women empowerment and vocational training. Run by a multi-cultural team of 150 Nigerian professionals, Italian expatriates and international volunteers. We recognize and respect each individual life and dignity without gender, religious or ethnic boundaries. We believe there is a desire for joy, hope and positive change in each of us. Our purpose is to serve with care, joy and professionalism people in need, to ignite hope and seeds for growth. For more info www.lovinggaze.org.

PRESS CONTACT

Barbara Pepoli, Loving Gaze General Manager, mob +234 0807 323 8847, e-mail Barbara.pepoli@lovinggaze.org