



# press release

## **Standard Chartered commits USD1.6 million to expand and innovate its Seeing is Believing eye-care programme in India**

**12 April 2016, Mumbai** – Standard Chartered Bank today announced the launch of five new eye care projects to bring in innovation and strengthen the delivery of eye-care to the needy between 2016 and 2019, with a donation commitment totalling to USD1.6 million. These projects will be delivered in partnership between the Bank, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and leading eye-care NGOs across 15 states, thereby combining resources and expertise.

“Eye-care is a critical component of health care. By building eye-care capacity in the country, we are improving health systems and infrastructure,” said Ms. Zarin Daruwala, Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank, India. “We are committed advocates in the campaign to eliminate avoidable blindness. Through sustained investment and innovation, and by integrating Seeing is Believing projects within national health systems, we are extending the impact of the programme to many marginalised communities in India.”

There are up to 39 million people already blind across the world and more than 90 per cent are in the developing world and deprived urban areas. In India, around 15 million people are thought to be blind with cataract as the most common form of avoidable blindness (62.6 per cent), followed by refractive error (19.7 per cent) and glaucoma (5.8 per cent). And yet 80 per cent of all blindness is avoidable with the right treatment and care.

Seeing is Believing is Standard Chartered’s global initiative to tackle avoidable blindness and visual impairment. India is an important market in the Bank’s international footprint.

We are proud to announce our new USD1 million partnership with Seva Foundation named “SCALE (Strengthening Capacity And Learning to Effectively Deliver Quality Eye Care)” which is set to build capacity of 50 hospitals across 15 states by addressing the areas of diagnostics, training and coaching, systems strengthening and demand generation. The project is designed to boost the number of cataract surgeries - the largest cause of blindness in India. During the three years of the project period we aim to accomplish 1.18 million cataract surgeries.

In 2016, a swathe of an innovation projects will be launched in India. To foster development of new ideas with the potential for significant impact on the way eye health is delivered in India, USD 600,000 grant has been awarded to four projects in the following two categories: back the development of innovations at initial pilot stage and, support innovations that have undergone some initial testing and are looking to prepare themselves for scale-up.

The research-based innovation projects delivered by expert organisations will exploit the following areas: developing low-cost, superior technology to treat cataracts by Aurolab; on-the-go technology to make prescriptions easy by Aurolab in partnership with PlenOptika; employing digital devices to read books led by the DAISY Consortium and lastly, converting smartphone into an eye testing device anchored by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Peek Vision Foundation. These projects will run for a period of 12 to 18 months.

Deploying a large number of projects dedicated to tackling visual impairment will help us support VISION2020. Since 2003, Seeing is Believing in India has impacted the lives of over 12 million people by providing quality and cost-effective eye-care interventions through 92 vision centres across 11 states. We have trained and employed over 8,500 people from the communities as Optometrists, Vision Technicians and Health Workers. Under the umbrella of SCALE, 20 new Vision Centres will be established, increasing our Vision Centre footprint to 111.

As a leading international bank, we have the privilege, opportunity and responsibility to be a force for good in the countries in which we operate. We are committed to promoting positive social and economic development in our markets, and have a comprehensive sustainability programme. The Bank has since 2003, invested more than USD10 million towards Seeing is Believing in India. A hallmark of our sustained contribution to garnering more players to support this key health agenda is our first historic partnership with the Bank's long-standing Private Bank client, established in Mathura.

Above and beyond Seeing is Believing, the dedicated programme to tackle visual impairment, the Bank also focuses on the issue of water, sanitation and hygiene education through its WASHE community programme, empowerment of young girls through Goal and financial education to build the financial capability of youth and entrepreneurs in India.

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### **About Seeing is Believing**

Seeing is Believing is a global initiative to tackle avoidable blindness, and is a collaboration between Standard Chartered (a leading international banking group) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and its membership of eye health organisations.

For more than a decade Seeing is Believing has been supporting projects to tackle avoidable blindness and visual impairment. To date, Seeing is Believing has reached 111 million people through medical interventions, eye examinations, eye health education and training and, raised over USD86.3 million globally, taking it closer to its target of USD100 million by 2020. Funds raised through Seeing is Believing represent the single largest cash contribution from the private sector to the development of eye health programmes through IAPB. As part of the Seeing is Believing programme, Standard Chartered pledges to match all donations until the target of USD100 million is reached.

## **Standard Chartered**

We are a leading international banking group, with more than 86,000 employees and a 150-year history in some of the world's most dynamic markets. We bank the people and companies driving investment, trade and the creation of wealth across Asia, Africa and the Middle East, where we earn around 90 per cent of our income and profits. Our heritage and values are expressed in our brand promise, Here for good.

Standard Chartered PLC is listed on the London and Hong Kong Stock Exchanges as well as the Bombay and National Stock Exchanges in India.

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