Press Release

Standard Chartered partners with Microsoft India and Data Security Council of India to Bridge the Cyber Security Skills and Gender Gap

- *Aimed at training women engineering graduates from Tier II & Tier III cities of India to provide career pathways in the rapidly expanding Cyber Security sector*
- *In the first phase, Standard Chartered is employing 18 women professionals under this programme*

08 March 2021, India - Standard Chartered Bank today announced its partnership with Microsoft India and Data Security Council of India (DSCI) to place 18 young women professionals from Tier II and Tier III cities in India in cyber security roles as part of the *CyberShikshaa* (cyber education) programme.

CyberShikshaa is aimed at skilling young women graduates who come from communities away from India's major population centres. Graduates with an engineering degree but with lack of access to opportunities are considered and trained to be job-ready and employable in the industry. Every year, India produces 1.5 million engineering graduates, with less than a third being women[1]. The talent gap is further heightened with cyber security talent crunch expected to create 3.5 million unfilled jobs globally by 2021[2].

Commenting on this, **Keshav Dhakad, Group head and General Counsel, Microsoft India**, said, "Microsoft is deeply committed to bridge the gender gap in technology and to create viable career pathways for women in technology. Our partnership with DSCI on the *CyberShikshaa* program is a strong step in that direction. Cyber security is a sector that has grown manifold in the last few years, leading to rise in the demand for skilled workforce in the sector. Our mission with *CyberShikshaa* is to equip young women professionals with the skills needed for a career in cybersecurity and the special recruitment drive by Standard Chartered will help create a strong momentum to encourage more women in Cyber Security."

Under the programme, young women graduates undergo and complete a curriculum that includes an interactive, four-month training course combining theory, case studies and practical hands on projects led by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), NIELIT and other training partners. The initiative also covers mentoring and soft skill workshops.

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[1] Microsoft, An extraordinary training program is helping women from disadvantaged backgrounds land careers in cybersecurity
[2] Cyber Security Ventures, Cybersecurity Jobs Report 2019-2020

Standard Chartered, a partner in the programme has committed to hire Cyber Security talent who have completed their training program. Commenting on the partnership, **Yuval Illuz, Group Chief Information Security Officer & COO, Trust, Data & Resilience, Standard Chartered** said, "Attracting women to take up Cyber Security careers require a range of efforts. More importantly, increasing women's participation in Cyber Security is not just good for women, it's absolutely important for the business and our society. Therefore, it's our shared responsibility with Microsoft and DSCI to create and support very strong career pathways in this domain for these future women leaders."

The programme is aligned to the Bank's global initiative, Futuremakers, to help young people in our communities to learn, earn and grow, which also builds on the organisation's recent Cyber Security campaign in Singapore targeting young students. Standard Chartered plans to continue being a committed partner.

Rama Vedashree, CEO, DSCI added, "*CyberShikshaa* is a collaborative initiative between DSCI and Microsoft India which bridges the current talent gap and draws more women into Cyber Security careers. This special recruitment drive by Standard Chartered is a great commitment shown towards supporting the 'Women in Cyber Security' cause and nurturing young talent. This will serve as an example urging other enterprises to join the momentum and create career opportunities for young women professionals. As we expand, we're constantly enhancing and evolving the programme to meet the industry needs from training to placement."

Till date, the *CyberShikshaa* programme has helped skill and equip over 500 women candidates, and over 220 girls have been successfully placed in the Industry.

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About CyberShikshaa

Microsoft & Data Security Council of India (DSCI) with the support from ISEA, an initiative of Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY) launched Project CyberShikshaa for skilling underserved women engineering graduates in the niche field of Cyber Security, to help them build a career and to scale up the diversity quotient of Cyber Security workforce, that has been low compared to overall Information Security Sector industry average. As part of this program, C-DAC, NIELIT and other training partners have been conducting an interactive training exclusively for women and are making them industry ready by imparting the requisite technical skills. In its second year, new modules such as CyberShikshaa for Beginners and Privacy Training for Women on Break have been added to the programme.

About Standard Chartered

We are a leading international banking group, with a presence in 59 of the world's most dynamic markets and serving clients in a further 85. Our purpose is to drive commerce and prosperity through our unique diversity, and 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.

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About Microsoft India

Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT" @microsoft) enables digital transformation for the era of an intelligent cloud and an intelligent edge. Its mission is to empower every person and every organisation on the planet to achieve more. Microsoft set up its India operations in 1990. Today, Microsoft entities in India have over 13,000 employees, engaged in sales and marketing, research, development and customer services and support, across 11 Indian cities – Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, New Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, Hyderabad, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune. Microsoft offers its global cloud services from local data centres to accelerate digital transformation across Indian startups, businesses, and government organisation.

About Data Security Council of India

Data Security Council of India (DSCI) is a not-for-profit, industry body on data protection in India, setup by NASSCOM®, committed towards making the cyberspace safe, secure and trusted by establishing best practices, standards and initiatives in cybersecurity and privacy. DSCI works together with the Government and their agencies, law enforcement agencies, industry sectors including IT-BPM, BFSI, CII, Telecom, industry associations, data protection authorities and think tanks for public advocacy, thought leadership, capacity building and outreach initiatives.

For more information, visit: www.dsci.in