

## **Standard Chartered reaches USD100 million goal to tackle avoidable blindness**

**London, 26 September 2018** - Standard Chartered announced today that it has reached the goal it set in 2011 to raise USD100 million for the fight against avoidable blindness and visual impairment. The goal has been reached two years ahead of the Bank's 2020 target date.

The news was shared with employees, clients and charity partners last night (25 September) at an event at the British Museum to mark 15 years of Seeing is Believing (SiB), Standard Chartered's global partnership with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) to tackle avoidable blindness and visual impairment. By funding projects run by international eye health organisations, SiB provides access to affordable and quality eye health services to people in low- and middle-income countries.

The money raised through SiB has reached more than 167 million people through medical interventions, eye examinations, and eye health education and training. The initiative has funded 184 eye health projects in 37 countries, supported 4.4 million sight-restoring surgeries and trained more than 318,000 health workers.

David Fein, Group General Counsel and Chairman, Seeing is Believing: "Seeing is Believing has changed the lives of millions of individuals and families by providing eye health services that enable many to return to education and work. As a result, this has boosted local economies and strengthened communities."

Avoidable blindness is a key health issue across Standard Chartered's footprint. Globally, there are an estimated 36 million blind people and a further 217 million people suffering from moderate or severe visual impairment. Yet 80 per cent of all visual impairment can be prevented or cured.

Initially launched in 2003 to fund 28,000 sight-restoring surgeries, SiB has evolved into a leading multi-stakeholder partnership that is supporting comprehensive eye care solutions, strengthening eye health systems and fostering the development of new

technologies across 37 countries. In 2011, the Bank committed to raise USD100 million for Seeing is Believing between 2003 and 2020.

The Bank has captured the story of the SiB partnership in [A visionary partnership: 15 years of Seeing is Believing](#) *[This should link to [sc.com/seeingisbelieving100million](https://sc.com/seeingisbelieving100million) however this is still to be confirmed.]* a report that highlights how the private sector and non-government organisations (NGOs) can draw upon their diverse capabilities to positively impact the lives of millions of people. It also summarises key lessons learned that may benefit other companies and NGOs considering similar multi-stakeholder partnerships.

With the fundraising goal achieved, SiB will continue to fund eye health projects up until the end of 2020. After this point, Standard Chartered will support the fight against avoidable blindness and visual impairment through the Vision Catalyst Fund (VCF). Led by a group of private sector and philanthropic organisations, the VCF is an ambitious plan to establish a USD1 billion fund that will provide eye care to all people in the Commonwealth and around the world.

David Fein says: “We are excited about the opportunity to support the development of the Vision Catalyst Fund as it has the potential to mobilise significantly more funding for the eye health sector globally. Working together with new and existing eye health partners and drawing on our experience from SiB, we look forward to being part of this ambitious next chapter in the fight against avoidable blindness.”

**Ends**

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### **About Seeing is Believing**

Seeing is Believing is a global initiative to tackle avoidable blindness. It is led by Standard Chartered and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). IAPB is the leading umbrella organisation for non-governmental organisations working in the field of eye care.

For more information about Seeing is Believing's USD100 million milestone, visit:

*[This should link to [sc.com/seeingisbelieving100million](https://sc.com/seeingisbelieving100million) however this is still to be confirmed.]*

For more information about Seeing is Believing and its work, visit:

[SeeingisBelieving.org](https://SeeingisBelieving.org)