

press release

Standard Chartered launches Online Arabic Resource Centre to help women entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses

***Resource Centre provides a variety of educational and interactive
components aimed at SMEs***

8 March 2011, UAE – To mark International Women's Day, Standard Chartered Bank today launched an Arabic version of the Women in Business Resource Centre, an online tool designed to help women entrepreneurs in general, and Arab Women in particular to start and grow their own businesses. The Resource Centre directly provides a variety of educational and interactive components aimed at small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), including modules and exercises on business planning, leadership skills and finances.

In addition to Arabic, the Resource Centre is available in seven languages, including traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese, Korean, Thai, Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi and Bengali. It is hosted online and is accessible globally via the Standard Chartered website (www.standardchartered.com/sme-banking/resourcecentre/), available to customers and the general public.

Joanna Fielding, Chief Financial Officer, West Standard Chartered Bank and Chair, Group Women's Council, commented:

"Women rarely have access to advice that has been targeted to their particular needs. Our Resource Centre offers practical information as well as tools that have been specifically designed for women entrepreneurs, around topics such as influence and negotiation, marketing to female consumers and the right reasons for scaling up one's business".

Through the interactive platform, users can also share their feedback, business tips and contact a Standard Chartered SME team member. Inspirational video case studies of role models from Bangladesh, Nigeria, Hong Kong and Singapore are also featured on the site in order to provide examples of successful entrepreneurship.

Deanna Othman, General Manager Premium Banking and Head of Diversity and Inclusion, Standard Chartered UAE, commented:

“As part of its Diversity and Inclusion agenda, Standard Chartered UAE is very keen to champion women entrepreneurs by providing the products, services and support they need to run successful businesses. The launch of the Arabic version of the Women in Business Resource Centre reflects our commitment to encourage and develop the skills of women entrepreneurs locally, regionally and globally. Internally, the Bank is very active in engaging our female staff in skill development forums and currently more than 40% of our 2200 employees in the UAE, are women working at the various levels of the Bank.”

Standard Chartered believes entrepreneurship plays a key role in economic growth in the Bank’s markets in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Women entrepreneurs are becoming increasingly important drivers of growth, with forty to fifty per cent of businesses in developing markets owned by women¹. Very few resources are targeted specifically at women entrepreneurs in these markets and therefore fail to address the specific challenges they face. These include a lack of female role models, access to financial education and confidence to start or grow their own businesses.

As part of its Diversity and Inclusion agenda, Standard Chartered is an active supporter of gender equality across its markets and in the Middle East, 37% of the Bank’s employees are women who are working at the Bank’s managerial and executive levels. The Women in Business Resource Centre is one of the ways that Standard Chartered Bank is supporting its Clinton Global Initiative commitment to educate at least 5,000 women in Asia on financial literacy.

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¹ “Scaling up: Why women-owned businesses can recharge the global economy.” Ernst & Young, 2009.

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Note to editors:

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With 1,700 offices in 70 markets, Standard Chartered offers exciting and challenging international career opportunities for more than 80,000 staff. It is committed to building a sustainable business over the long term and is trusted worldwide for upholding high standards of corporate governance, social responsibility, environmental protection and employee diversity. The Bank's heritage and values are expressed in its brand promise, 'Here for good'.

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