

# press release

## **Standard Chartered sets sights high with US\$100 million target to help eradicate avoidable blindness**

**London and New York, 21 September** - Standard Chartered announced today - at the 2011 Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting - that it will raise US\$100 million by 2020 to build sustainable eye-care services across Asia, Africa and the Middle East, almost trebling its fundraising for the prevention of blindness from 2003 to date. With nearly 90% of avoidable blindness occurring in the developing world<sup>1</sup>, the issue affects economic productivity in countries where Standard Chartered operates. Through its latest commitment, the Bank aims to support further progress towards eliminating avoidable blindness by 2020.

The Bank will fundraise through Seeing is Believing, its global initiative with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and leading international eye-care NGOs. The Bank not only promotes and coordinates fundraising for the programme, but also matches every dollar raised. Since 2003, the Bank has raised US\$ 37 million, leaving a further US\$63 million needed by 2020.

Around 80% of blindness can be treated or prevented, and the interventions are some of the most cost-effective in health-care; a cataract operation costs on average US\$30, Vitamin A treatment around US\$1. With the US\$63 million funding, leading international eye-care NGOs have agreed to deliver 35 comprehensive eye-care projects globally, providing access to cataract operations and preventative treatments in deprived communities. Five projects, valued at US\$5 million each, will focus exclusively on providing eye-care for children, supporting existing health care services, and building capacity for new services across seven countries. The remaining 30 projects, valued at US\$1 million each, will respond to local needs, by raising awareness of eye-care issues, providing eye-care screenings or carrying out surgeries, across 20 countries.

Richard Meddings, Group Finance Director at Standard Chartered and Chairman of Seeing is Believing said, "It is in our power to eliminate 80% of blindness. However, 39 million people around the world remain blind. Helping individuals to see again transforms not just their own lives but also the lives of all those around them. Restoring someone's sight gives them economic independence and frees them from a life of dependence. Standard Chartered, through Seeing is Believing, is committed to continuing the fight against avoidable blindness. By 2020, we intend to raise a further US\$63 million to further extend access to eye-care to many more people across our footprint in Asia, Africa and the Middle East."

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation

Staff engagement will continue to be an essential part of Seeing is Believing. Standard Chartered's 85,000 employees are a key driver of the programme, having built a strong fundraising momentum since the programme began in 2003. Many employees use their paid volunteering leave to fundraise or to support eye-care NGOs by raising awareness of eye-care issues in local communities - reinforcing the Bank's 'Here for good' brand promise.

Seeing is Believing has provided access to eye-care services to more than 25 million people since it launched in 2003. It has helped fund more than 2.7 million eye surgeries, training for more than 58,000 health care workers, 3.4 million eye-care screenings and the distribution of 126,000 pairs of eye glasses across Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Through the initiative, NGOs have established 62 vision centres in India, a pioneering model of community eye-care which is being rolled out to other countries.

Through Seeing is Believing, NGOs have helped move eye-care up the public healthcare agenda in countries such as China, Ghana, Indonesia and South Africa. Over the next few years, Standard Chartered will support NGOs working with the Pakistani government to integrate eye-care into health screening at schools. This aims to identify children who need glasses, as well as those with potentially blinding ocular conditions or severe visual impairment, before the issue impacts their education. The project aims to develop a standard approach for school eye screening in Pakistan.

**For further information please contact:**

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**Note to Editors:**

**Standard Chartered – leading the way in Asia, Africa and the Middle East**

Standard Chartered is a leading international banking group. It has operated for over 150 years in some of the world's most dynamic markets and earns more than 90 per cent of its income and profits in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. This geographic focus and commitment to developing deep relationships with clients and customers has driven the Bank's growth in recent years. Standard Chartered PLC is listed on the London and Hong Kong stock exchanges as well as the Bombay and National Stock Exchanges in India.

With 1,700 offices in 70 markets, the Group offers exciting and challenging international career opportunities for around 85,000 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. Standard Chartered's heritage and values are expressed in its brand promise, 'Here for good'.

For more information please visit [www.standardchartered.com](http://www.standardchartered.com)

**About the Clinton Global Initiative**

Established in 2005 by President Bill Clinton, the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) convenes global leaders to devise and implement innovative solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges. Since 2005, CGI Annual Meetings have brought together nearly 150 current and former heads of state, 18 Nobel Prize laureates, hundreds of leading CEOs, heads of foundations, major philanthropists, directors of the most effective nongovernmental organizations, and prominent members of the media. These CGI members have made nearly 2,000 commitments, which have already improved the lives of 300 million people in more than 180 countries. When fully funded and implemented, these commitments will be valued in excess of \$63 billion. The 2011 Annual Meeting will take place Sept. 20-22 in New York City.

This year, CGI also convened CGI America, a meeting focused on developing ideas for driving economic growth in the United States. The CGI community also includes CGI U, which hosts an annual meeting for undergraduate and graduate students, and CGI Lead, which engages a select group of young CGI members for leadership development and collective commitment-making. For more information, visit [www.clintonglobalinitiative.org](http://www.clintonglobalinitiative.org).