

# press release

## Standard Chartered launches 5 eye vision centres in Maharashtra

*To cover 250,000 people under its Seeing is Believing project in 3 years*

**Mumbai, 17 May, 2017** – Standard Chartered Bank today opened 5 vision centres in Maharashtra as part of its **Seeing is Believing** project, a global initiative to tackle avoidable blindness and visual impairment. With this launch, the bank has taken the total tally of such centres across India to 120.

These vision centres are located in Latur, Nanded, Parbhani and Jalna districts (Maharashtra).

This project will be implemented in collaboration with Canadian NGO, Operation Eyesight Universal and its partner hospital, Udayagiri Lions Eye Hospital (Udgir - Maharashtra) and Shri Ganapathi Nethralaya (Jalna – Maharashtra).

The Bank has since 2003, invested more than USD10 million towards **Seeing is Believing** in India, which is an important market in the Bank's international footprint.

**Ms. Zarin Daruwala, Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank, India**, said, "Eye-care is a critical component of health care. By building eye-care capacity in the country, we are improving health systems and infrastructure. 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."

India has over 12 million blind people, the largest anywhere in the world; however 80% of blindness can be prevented through a simple cataract surgery or a pair of spectacles. In Bihar and Maharashtra, blindness is a significant public health problem because of the lack of infrastructure and poor health seeking behaviour of the populace.

These new vision centres will act as a hub for implementation of community eye health projects which will include a comprehensive door to door survey by women community eye health workers to identify those suffering from eye problems and provide them appropriate treatment at the base hospitals.

At the end of the three year project, it is anticipated that over 250,000 persons will be screened for potentially blinding conditions, over 4,000 will undergo sight-saving surgeries and over 3,500 will receive spectacles in the districts covered under the project. *It is also estimated that at the end of the three year project, prevalence of blindness will be reduced from 1.47% to 0.3% (WHO and Vision 2020 India target) and over 125 villages will be declared avoidable blindness free.*

**For further information please contact:**

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**Note to Editors**

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