

# press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Standard Chartered celebrates World Sight Day with 2012 Walk for Sight – Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria’s “Seeing is Believing” Initiative**

**Bank Contributes to local eye care initiatives to highlight that 80% of global blindness can be eliminated**

**October 13 in Lagos, Nigeria** – To mark World Sight Day 2012, on October 13, 2012, the Management and Staff of SCB Nigeria held their 8<sup>th</sup> “Walk for Sight” in support of their Group’s Seeing is Believing initiative. World Sight Day is celebrated annually on the second Thursday of October to raise awareness of visual impairment.

The global economic cost of blindness is estimated to be US\$200 billion per year. Across the globe, 39 million people are blind and 246 million people suffer from visual impairment. With 90% of avoidable blindness occurring in the developing world, it is an issue which is of particular resonance in many markets where Standard Chartered operates.

Yet 80% of blindness and visual impairment is avoidable (preventable or curable) and treatments are simple and cost-effective. For example, a cataract operation which restores sights costs about \$30 in some parts of the world. As a result, 20 million people have had their sight saved since 1999. To continue this momentum, Standard Chartered has committed to raise US\$100 million by 2020 through Seeing is Believing – its global charitable initiative run in partnership with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB).

Seeing is Believing helps to fund leading eye care organisations to deliver training projects for doctors and health workers, and develop eye care infrastructure and support services for the poor. To date, Seeing is Believing has invested US\$37 million in projects to restore sight, prevent blindness and educate communities about the importance of eye care, reaching up to 31 million people. Seeing is Believing has contributed to restoring the sight of over 2.8 million people.

Jeanette McKenna, Head of Seeing is Believing at Standard Chartered, said: "There is a lot that remains to be done to eliminate avoidable blindness and individual organisations like Standard Chartered can only be part of the solution. Coordinated action from governments, NGOs and the private sector is required to eradicate blindness by 2020. We hope that through Seeing is Believing, we can raise awareness of the issue in our markets and amongst our stakeholders. Through our staff, resources and client network we hope to raise new investment for the campaign, and World Sight Day provides an excellent opportunity to draw attention to the initiative."

Funds raised through Seeing is Believing are channelled into projects aligned with 'VISION2020: The Right to Sight', a global campaign to tackle avoidable blindness. The aim of VISION2020 is simple and ambitious, namely to eliminate all forms of avoidable blindness by the year 2020.

In support of the SIB initiative, Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria has held a fundraising walk annually in the last seven years, raising a total of \$680,000 which has helped to fund successful cataract operations and treatment (still ongoing ) for approximately 14,000 persons between January 2006 and September 2012

The staff turnout for the walk the bank held on Saturday was very impressive. The walk was an outstanding success and attracted over 1,000 participants from all walks of life. These included representatives of donor companies, spouses, children, friends and relatives of their members of staff.

The bank's chosen implementation partners in this project are Sight Savers International and the Nigerian Society for the Blind. These are the same partners chosen in the last seven editions and they were picked once again because of the fact that the bank has found them to be credible institutions with an unwavering commitment to aid the eradication of blindness in Nigeria.

Based on the funds raised, yesterday, the bank gave 2 cheques totaling =N=10 million to:

Nigeria Society for the Blind: =N= 5 million

Sight Savers International: =N= 5 million

With the funds raised this year, the bank has raised approximately \$ 740,000 in support of the eradication of blindness in Nigeria.

**According to Asiwaju Fola Osibo, the Deputy Chairman of the Governing Council of the Nigerian Society for the Blind,**

*“We have received unwavering support from Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria for quite a few years now. Without this support, it would have been extremely difficult for us to achieve the objectives of our Vocational Training Centre for the Blind in Oshodi. Over the years, the bank has provided us with amazing financial, infrastructural and administrative assistance. We will like to express our deep appreciation to the Board, Management and Staff of the Bank for their unwavering commitment to the centre.”*

**Mrs. Safiya Sanda, Program Manager for Sight Savers International said:**

*“We are quite pleased with the generous support we have received over the last few years from Standard Chartered Bank, Nigeria. Over the last seven years, investment by the Seeing is Believing programme in Kwara State has meant that human resources have been developed, the number of surgeries performed each year has increased, awareness about eye services has been created and there has been an increase in the number of people accessing services. We have also been able to extend our services to Zamfara State which has an urgent need for comprehensive eye care services. This means that the project is now well positioned to grow outputs over the next couple of years. With the support of Standard Chartered Bank, Sightsavers will be able to continue to provide Comprehensive Eye Care Programmes.*

*These programmes will continue to provide services specially created for those who need help most, such as the rural population, under-privileged people, school children, students and the reversibly blind.*

*The Board, Management and Staff of Standard Chartered Bank in Nigeria have been real partners in progress with Sight Savers International in the development of our programmes and a large part of the success we have achieved so far can be directly linked with this support”.*

**According to Mrs Bola Adesola, Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria’s CEO,**

*“We are very proud of what we have achieved with our Walk for Sight initiative in the last seven years. However, we could not have done this without the support of a lot of our staff, customers, friends, family members and the media. It is quite gratifying to see that the \$680,000 we have raised from this initiative in the last seven years has made a positive difference in the activities of our two partner NGOs. We are also happy, that today, we have added another \$60,000 to this increasing the total amount raised from this initiative to \$740,000.”*

Clearly the Board, Management and Staff of Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria have sent a message with this initiative that as a financial institution, they take Corporate Social Responsibility very seriously and are truly committed to Nigeria and the SIB Project.

This is a good way to amplify the bank’s commitment to its brand promise, “Here for good”.

- ENDS -

**Notes 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 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 nearly 87,000 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'.

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