

# press release

## STANDARD CHARTERED OPENS NEW EYE CENTRE AT SOLWEZI GENERAL HOSPITAL

**12<sup>th</sup> December 2013 - Solwezi, Zambia:** Each year people succumb to un-necessary blindness in Zambia and other parts of the developing world, which could have been avoided through proper eye care, says Standard Chartered Bank CEO, Andrew Okai. He was speaking on Thursday when he officially launched the new eye-care centre at Solwezi General Hospital and handed over US\$300,000 worth of new eye screening equipment.

The new vision centre at Solwezi General Hospital was made possible through 'Seeing is Believing' (SiB) - Standard Chartered Bank's preventative blindness initiative. Launched in Zambia in 2009, the bank has committed US\$2m towards SiB. Since then, over 1million Zambians have benefitted from free eye screening, cataract surgery and free spectacles.

Speaking at the launch in Solwezi, Mr. Andrew Okai said, *"Seeing is Believing is very important to us at Standard Chartered Bank because it focuses on investing in eye care projects that will have a long-term impact in areas of high need. In 2013 alone, 240,000 patients have had their eyes screened, including 45,000 children; over 10,000 cataract operations have been carried out; and we have handed over 20,000 free spectacles to communities across Zambia."*

*"Seeing is Believing is the first major preventative blindness initiative in Zambia. As the oldest banking institution in the country, SiB demonstrates that Standard Chartered is here for people, here for communities, Here for Good,"* said Mr. Okai.

Officiating at the same event, Honourable Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. Chitalu Chilufya said he was pleased that the Ministry of Health had partnered with Standard Chartered Bank and ORBIS to provide essential eye care services to the people of Solwezi. He added that such public-private partnerships were vital and challenged other private companies working in Zambia to benchmark their CSR programmes to Standard Chartered's.

In North Western Province, Standard Chartered has partnered with ORBIS to provide free eye care services to communities. Over a period of five years health teams, including ophthalmologists, ophthalmic clinical officers and nurses across ten districts of the North

Western Province, will receive training and the provision of the necessary equipment to provide the vital eye care services needed by all communities. These teams will promote eye health, prevent blindness and deliver quality affordable comprehensive eye care service to people of all ages.

**-ENDS-**

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#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

##### **Standard Chartered Bank in Zambia**

- Zambia is a core part of the Standard Chartered Bank's Africa strategic footprint and has consistently been among the top five revenue contributors for the region.
- In Zambia, the Bank was established in 1906 and has since grown to be one of the most profitable banks in the country primarily as a result of organic growth.
- The Bank services both wholesale and retail banking customers
- Standard Chartered Bank Zambia (SCBZ) accounts for 19% of the market share.
- The Bank is consistently among the top 3 banks in profitability and balance sheet size.
- The Bank is a leader in providing access to finance for the mining, agriculture, telecommunications and SME sectors.

**ORBIS** provides the tools, training and technology necessary for hospitals in developing countries to find workable and lasting solutions to save sight.

By empowering its partner institutions to take action, ORBIS helps them to reach the point where they can provide, on their own, quality eye care services that are affordable, accessible and sustainable, to their own communities.”

To learn more about ORBIS, please visit [www.orbis.org.za](http://www.orbis.org.za)