

press release

Standard Chartered celebrates World Sight Day by Sponsoring Blind Football Eastern League

Bank contributes to local eye care initiative to highlight that 80% of global blindness can be eliminated

Tokyo, 11th October 2012 - To mark World Sight Day 2012, Standard Chartered Bank Japan is sponsoring the seventh match of the Blind Football Eastern League 2012 through Japan Blind Football Association (JBFA). In Japan, the Bank has extended its continuous support to the blind football activities as part of its commitment to "Seeing is Believing" - a global program aimed at eliminating avoidable blindness. This is the Bank's third time sponsorship to the Blind Football Eastern League. 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 with restores sight only costs US\$30. 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 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.

Mr. Eigo Matsuzaki, Managing Director of JBFA, says "JBFA has been campaigning with the power of football to help create a society where the visually impaired and those who are not can live together. What we at the association envision is the improvement of social circumstances surrounding the visually impaired with a rise in the public awareness of blind football. In that context, we are convinced that both 'Seeing is Believing' has a high degree of affinity with our campaign, indeed. We are grateful to Standard Chartered Bank for not only supporting us financially for the football event, but also encouraging its employees to voluntarily participate in it and extending cooperation in many other ways, including the promotion of low vision care. We would like to continue to strengthen cooperating with Standard Chartered Bank Japan in pursuing our goal of resolving the social issue."

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Notes to Editors:

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Seeing is Believing

Seeing is Believing is a global initiative to help tackle avoidable blindness, and is a collaboration between Standard Chartered and the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). IAPB is the leading umbrella organisation for non-governmental organisations working in the field of eye-care. Together with the World Health Organisation, it launched the 'Vision 2020 – The Right to Sight', a global campaign to eliminate avoidable blindness by 2020. To date, Seeing is Believing has raised over USD50 million for blindness initiatives and plans to raise a further USD50 million by 2020. Seeing is Believing is the single largest contributor to the development of Vision 2020 programmes through IAPB. As part of the Seeing is Believing programme, Standard Chartered pledges to match all donations until the target of USD100 million is reached.

www.seeingisbelieving.org