

Standard Chartered partners with The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust to eliminate avoidable blindness

New programmes will benefit the poorest and most vulnerable

London, 10 October 2013 The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust (The Trust) and Standard Chartered, a leading international banking group, have formed a strategic partnership to help significantly advance the elimination of avoidable blindness.

An estimated 80 per cent of blindness globally could either be prevented or treated. This new partnership, launched on World Sight Day, will increase momentum behind the VISION 2020 goal of eliminating avoidable blindness by the year 2020.

The Trust, established by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in 2011 to mark and celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's 60 year contribution to the Commonwealth, will be supported by Standard Chartered, an organisation that has been focused on tackling avoidable blindness for ten years through its community investment initiative, *Seeing is Believing*. Through the partnership, ambitious programmes with proven solutions will be delivered across the Commonwealth by the Trust, supported by a donation of USD20 million from Standard Chartered, the largest corporate donor to the Trust.

The partnership will focus on two main causes of avoidable blindness – blinding trachoma and retinopathy of prematurity (ROP):

- **Blinding Trachoma Programme:** Trachoma is the world's leading infectious cause of blindness. It's a neglected tropical disease which manifests gradually and, in some cases, leads slowly and painfully to complete blindness. At least 110 million people live in areas where the disease is endemic and 4.6 million are in the advanced stages of the disease. Within the Trust's pan Commonwealth programme, this partnership will target blinding trachoma in Africa, including in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, and Nigeria. Of the global population that live in trachoma endemic areas, 77 per cent live in Africa, which has an estimated 28 million cases of active trachoma. The joint initiative plans to ultimately reach over 17 million people in 217 districts.
- **Retinopathy of Prematurity Programme:** ROP, an entirely avoidable and treatable condition, is caused when preterm infants are given suboptimal neonatal care during the first few days and weeks of life, such as being exposed to infection or given too much oxygen. With an estimated 15 million preterm births per year, it is a common cause of blindness in children and is becoming increasingly prevalent in emerging economies where neonatal care services are expanding. The programme will focus on supporting the development of a national plan to tackle this problem in India, which has the highest number of preterm births worldwide.

The partnership will also support the **Fellowships, Research and Technology Programme**, designed to develop expertise in eye care and strengthen health systems across the Commonwealth. It will also introduce potentially life-changing new technologies that will enable eye care to be delivered for a fraction of the current cost in rural and isolated areas.

Commenting on the partnership, Sir John Major, Chairman of the Trust said:

“I am delighted that The Trust has embarked on this joint partnership with Standard Chartered, in our shared campaign against avoidable blindness. It is an extraordinarily generous gesture from Standard Chartered, and will make a huge difference to the international effort underway to eradicate avoidable blindness amongst some of the world’s poorest people.”

“The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust was established to provide a lasting legacy to Her Majesty The Queen across the Commonwealth, and this partnership embodies the spirit of what the Trust is aiming to achieve. I am enormously grateful to Standard Chartered, not only for their most generous donation, but also for the leadership that the company has given on this particular health issue over the past ten years, and the knowledge this brings to the Trust. Through focus, funding and co-ordination with the world’s leading experts in blindness, the Trust is committed to highlighting the plight of those who suffer from avoidable blindness, and will continue to identify and implement the solutions that exist to eradicate it – throughout the world – in the name of Her Majesty The Queen.”

Sir John Peace, Chairman of Standard Chartered said: *“The gift of sight is something that most individuals take for granted, yet there are still many people around the world and in the countries in which we operate who are needlessly blind. This is an issue that Standard Chartered has been helping to tackle for a decade.*”

“We are proud of what we have helped to achieve through Seeing is Believing, and we are honoured to be part of this wider collection of experts and partners to deliver even greater impact. The programmes will play a revolutionary role in the goal to eliminate avoidable blindness. By supporting the Trust, we look forward to seeing the importance of eye care increasing on the global health agenda.”

Peter Ackland, CEO, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) said: *“IAPB is happy to have played a role in facilitating this partnership between the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust and Standard Chartered: two key organisations working for the achievement of better eye health. This is a very important development and it underscores one of the cornerstones of IAPB’s strategy – working together to eliminate avoidable blindness.”*

The Trust will work with expert NGOs to implement the programmes over the next five years.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

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About The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust is a charitable foundation established in 2012 to mark and celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen.

The Trust has received donations from governments, organisations, businesses, private groups and individuals to transform lives across the Commonwealth. We will invest in a series of programmes within the two themes of youth leadership and avoidable blindness. Our mission is to empower a new generation of young leaders and help to eliminate avoidable blindness across the Commonwealth. This legacy, which will be owned by the whole Commonwealth, will be our tribute to Her Majesty The Queen.

Find out more by visiting www.jubileetribute.org

About Standard Chartered

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 around 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 to over 88,000 staff. It is committed to building a sustainable business over the long term and 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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International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)

IAPB is the coordinating membership organisation leading international efforts in blindness prevention activities. IAPB's mission is to eliminate the main causes of avoidable blindness and visual impairment by bringing together governments and non-governmental agencies to facilitate the planning, development and implementation of sustainable national eye care programmes. IAPB promotes VISION 2020: The Right to Sight, the joint initiative with the World Health Organization (WHO) for the elimination of avoidable blindness by the year 2020.

Avoidable blindness is defined as blindness which could be either treated or prevented by known, cost-effective means. Although there are many other causes of vision impairment, VISION 2020 seeks to address the main causes of avoidable blindness, in order to have the greatest possible impact on vision loss worldwide.

For more information on VISION 2020 please see: <http://www.iapb.org/vision-2020>