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**OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF STANDARD CHARTERED SPECTACLE**  
**DISPENSING LAB**

**HOSPITAL UMUM SARAWAK**  
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  - DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
  - LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND  
SALAM 1MALAYSIA

1. FIRST OF ALL , I WOULD LIKE TO THANK HOSPITAL UMUM SARAWAK , STANDARD CHARTERED BANK AND ALL THOSE INVOLVED FOR INVITING ME TO THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PROJECT , THE “SPECTACLES DISPENSING LAB“ HERE IN KUCHING , SARAWAK .

2. LET ME AT THE ON-SET DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT MANY OF US MAY NOT REALIZE THAT WE COULD HAVE OVER-USED OR ABUSED OUR EYES ONE WAY OR ANOTHER IN THE PAST DUE TO WORK HABITS AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES . EXAMPLES OF THESE INCLUDES INCREASING DEMAND ON OUR JOBS WHICH IN TURN INCREASE OUR LIKELIHOOD OF DEVELOPING EYE PROBLEMS , WATCHING TELEVISION EXCESSIVELY AND AT CLOSE RANGE , SPENDING LONG HOURS ON COMPUTERS AND STRAINING OUR EYES ON THE SMALL SMART-PHONE SCREENS CHECKING FACEBOOK OR TWITTER UPDATES , READING OR PLAYING GAMES .

3. AS YOU ALL MAY BE AWARE , MALAYSIA HAS SET HER EYES IN BECOMING A HIGH INCOME , INNOVATION-LED AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY THROUGH THE VARIOUS TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMS SET OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT . IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE MUST NOW TAKE IT SERIOUSLY IN CARING FOR OUR EYES AS A LOSS OF THE EYESIGHT , IS A LOSS IN PRODUCTIVITY WHICH TRANSLATES IN US NOT ACHIEVING OUR NATIONAL GOALS .

4. THEREFORE , PREVENTION WILL BE CRITICAL AND CRUCIAL ELEMENTS IN OUR NATIONAL EYE CARE STRATEGY WHICH THE

GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED ON ITS PART IN ENSURING CONTINUOUS ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR THE RAKYAT . THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSTANTLY VIGILANT AND COMMITTED ON ITS PART IN CARING FOR THE NATION BY HAVING NEW CREATIVE INITIATIVES TO SERVE IT PURPOSE , FOR EXAMPLE THE 1MALAYSIA MOBILE CLINIC .

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

5. TODAY , IT IS A MAJOR PUBLIC HEALTH FAILURE THAT SO MANY PEOPLE CONTINUE TO BE BLIND IN BOTH DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES DUE TO INAPPROPRIATE SPECTACLES . THE QUESTION WHICH NOW ARISES IS AS TO WHY THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT ABLE TO OBTAIN REFRACTIVE CORRECTION WITH THE POSSIBLE REASONS BEING LOW RATES OF PEOPLE SEEKING REFRACTIVE ERROR CORRECTION AND LIMITED ACCESS TO TREATMENTS .

6. AS SUCH FUTURE VISION SCREENING PROGRAMMES NEEDS TO BE IMPLEMENTED ON A LARGER SCALE TO DETECT INDIVIDUALS SUFFERING FROM REFRACTIVE ERROR BLINDNESS. HOWEVER , IN ORDER FOR SUCH PROGRAMMES TO BE SUCCESSFUL AND ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES , QUALITY AND TRAINED PERSONNELS NEEDS TO BE ENHANCED TOGETHER WITH IMPROVED AND ADEQUATE FACILITIES IN UNDER-SERVED AREAS . THIS INCLUDES ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE AND REASONABLE QUALITY SPECTACLES FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM REFRACTIVE ERROR BLINDNESS .

7. TOWARDS THIS END , THE SPECTACLES DISPENSING LAB INITIATIVE IS A PRACTICAL SOLUTION IN ADDRESSING THE BURDEN ON THE POOR AND UNDERPRIVILEGED SARAWAKIANS IN TERMS OF CLINICAL EYE CARE . THE EFFORTS OF BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS TO PROMOTE PREVENTIVE EYE CARE AND DELAY DETERIORATION OF THE EYES FROM THE START ESPECIALLY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD IS LAUDABLE AND MUST BE INCREASED FOR BETTER OUTCOMES .

8. UNDOUBTEDLY , THE COMMUNITY CAN ALSO PLAY A VITAL PART IN THIS EFFORT BY ENCOURAGING EACH OTHER TO GO FOR REGULAR EYE SCREENING PROGRAMMES WHICH ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY . ON THE CONTRARY , REGARDLESS OF INSTITUTIONAL OR COMMUNITY EFFORTS , WE AS INDIVIDUALS MUST CONTINUE TO TAKE CHARGE IN CARING FOR OUR EYES .

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

9. ARGUABLY , THE MOST DIFFICULT PART IN CARING FOR OUR EYES IS BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL WHICH WE ARE AWARE BUT NOT PRACTISING ON A REGULAR BASIS .

10. LIKE THE SAYING GOES , OLD HABITS DIE HARD AND I CAN UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE HOW DIFFICULT IT IS FOR ALL OF US TO TAKE OUR EYES AWAY FROM COMPUTER SCREENS AND HANDHELD ELECTRONIC DEVICES EVEN FOR A MOMENT ESPECIALLY SO WITH OUR DEPENDENCY ON SUCH TOOLS IN

OUR DAILY LIVES . NEVERTHELESS , I ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOU TO CREATE A BALANCE IN THE WAY WE LIVE BY HAVING MORE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AS WELL .

11. I AM HEARTENED TO SEE THE RANGE OF INITIATIVES AND AMOUNT OF WORK BEING PUT IN TO TACKLE EYE CARE AND ITS ASSOCIATED HEALTH CONDITIONS BY HOSPITAL UMUM SARAWAK FOR THE PEOPLE OF SARAWAK . THE WORK AND INITIATIVES OF THESE MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND CORPORATE BODIES LIKE STANDARD CHARTERED BANK AND ITS SUBSIDIARY SCOPE INTERNATIONAL MALAYSIA ARE HIGHLY COMMENDABLE AND ENCOURAGING .

12. FINALLY , I WOULD LIKE TO ONCE AGAIN CONGRATULATE AND THANK THE ABOVE MENTIONED ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR UNTIRING EFFORTS IN SERVING OUR PEOPLE BY PROVIDING PROPER AND ACCESSIBLE EYE CARE SERVICES WHICH WILL RESULT IN INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR PEOPLE .

THANK YOU .