

Essilor's partnership with Royal Government of Bhutan achieves milestone, delivering first 10,000 pairs of glasses

Eyewear used in Bhutan School Sight program, which aims to screen all students by October

(Charenton-Le-Pont, France - 22 May 2019) – Essilor and the Royal Government of Bhutan officially launched their partnership to make Bhutan the first country in the world to eradicate poor vision with a monumental milestone – the delivery of 10,000 pairs of eyeglasses for use in its Bhutan School Sight program. To mark the occasion, Her Majesty Ashi Kesang Choeden Wangchuck, Queen Mother of His Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo, who made possible the partnership with her patronage, presented eyeglasses to citizens in a launch ceremony yesterday.

Organized by the Ministry of Health, the Bhutan School Sight program which offers free vision screening for all students aged six to eighteen and equips those in need with free glasses, is underway and will be completed by October. The adult screening program will begin in 2020.

As part of the partnership, starting from the last quarter of 2019, nearly 200 health assistants will be trained to conduct basic visual acuity tests, distribute simple reading glasses and direct patients with vision correction needs to eye health practitioners. These health assistants will be able to conduct vision screenings for the residents in their communities.

In December 2018, Essilor signed [Letters of Intent](#) with the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Central Monastic Body to sustainably strengthen the country's vision care infrastructure and eradicate unprotected and uncorrected poor vision from its population. Today, 25% of those in Bhutan suffer from uncorrected poor vision, and a large portion is at risk of exposure to UVA/UVB rays due to high altitudes. Together, the partners will address the two greatest barriers to good vision – access and awareness – through training and capacity building, philanthropic support and raising awareness.

Chairman of Essilor, Hubert Sagnières, said: *“Good vision transforms more than just a person's health and wellbeing – it reduces inequalities and positively impacts the daily lives of individuals, their families and their communities through their ability to learn, work and be safe. Simply put, improving sight improves lives and will help advance the country's Gross National Happiness Index.”* Sagnières continued; *“We are pleased with the progress of our journey together so far and look forward to many more milestones. It is an honor to be making a difference in the lives of Bhutanese citizens, and those of citizens around the world as we work toward eradicating poor vision in one generation.”*

Her Excellency the Health Minister of Bhutan, Lyonpo Dechen Wangmo mentioned, *“We hope that through this partnership, the prevalence of poor vision is significantly reduced, that every Bhutanese who requires refractive error correction has access to eyeglasses. We would like to thank Essilor for their commitment to this cause.”*

The partnership sees Essilor donating 400,000 pairs of corrective eyewear and sunglasses, dispensed via existing healthcare programs. This donation is set to eradicate poor vision in Bhutan as it provides first-time eyewear to all Bhutanese citizens with uncorrected poor vision and to those in need of protection.

About Essilor

Essilor International is the world's leading ophthalmic optics company. Essilor designs, manufactures and markets a wide range of lenses to improve and protect eyesight. Its mission is to improve lives by improving sight. To support this mission, Essilor allocates more than €200 million to research and innovation every year, in a commitment to continuously bring new, more effective products to market. Its flagship brands are Varilux®, Crizal®, Transitions®, Eyezen™, Xperio®, Foster Grant®, Bolon™ and Costa®. It also develops and markets equipment, instruments and services for eyecare professionals. Essilor International is a subsidiary of EssilorLuxottica. The EssilorLuxottica share trades on the Euronext Paris market and is included in the Euro Stoxx 50 and CAC 40 indices. Codes and symbols: ISIN: FR0000121667; Reuters: ESLX.PA; Bloomberg: EL:FP.

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