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SIR DORABJI TATA TRUST & SIGHTSAVERS BATTLE AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS IN INDIA

International development charity Sightsavers International is receiving an investment of \$530,000 over three years from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, to support essential eye care services in India's largest state, Madhya Pradesh. The overall aim of the campaign is to change the lives of people living in the state by helping to reduce poverty, through the prevention and cure of blindness.

Madhya Pradesh, in central India, has a high prevalence and incidence of blindness. Unfortunately, due to financial, environmental and social factors many vulnerable communities, especially those in rural areas are simply not able to access eye services. This campaign will ensure Sightsavers can work with local partners throughout Madhya Pradesh to help deliver services where existing health infrastructure is limited or where people simply can not afford to access them.

In some areas of Madhya Pradesh over 60% of blindness is due to cataract, the clouding of the lens in the eye, which leads to blindness. Losing your sight can mean the difference between supporting yourself and your family and living a life of destitution, and often forcing extended family to support you. The financial support of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust which was established in 1932 by the elder son of Jamsetji Tata, founder of the Tata Group, will enable Sightsavers to work with its local partners to provide more free and subsidised surgeries for thousands of people in the state, restoring people's independence.

Elizabeth Kurian, regional director of Sightsavers India comments: "Sightsavers is delighted to be working with the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and, together with our partners, we are all set to transform the lives of some of Madhya Pradesh's most vulnerable communities with something as simple as a pair of glasses or a 20 minute operation. This campaign is a very important step on the long road to improving the economic-situation of the state."

A staggering 75% of blindness around the world is easily preventable or treatable, often through simple and cost effective interventions such as cataract surgery.

Ends

For further press information about Sightsavers or for images, please contact Rachel Heald on 01444 446754, rheald@sightsavers.org. For media enquiries out of hours, please call 07775 928253.

Notes to editors:

About Sightsavers International:

1. Sightsavers International is a registered UK charity (Registered charity numbers 207544 and SC038110) that works in more than 30 developing countries to prevent blindness, restore sight and advocate for social inclusion and equal rights for people who are blind and visually impaired. www.sightsavers.org
2. There are 45 million blind people in the world; 75% of all blindness can be prevented or cured.
3. Since 1950, Sightsavers has restored sight to more than 5.65 million people and treated over 100 million more.
4. Sightsavers has worked in India for over 40 years, working with 90 local partners across 18 states

About the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust:

The Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, established in 1932 by Sir Dorabji Tata, the elder son of Jamsetji Tata, founder of the Tata Group, is one of the oldest, non-sectarian philanthropic organizations in India. Its vision of constructive philanthropy has been catalytic to the developmental works carried out in the country, while all its initiatives have had contemporary relevance. <http://www.dorabjitatatrust.org/>