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HSBC INTRODUCES NEW BARRIER-FREE BANKING SERVICES AT BRANCH

****Meeting the needs of customers with impairment****

HSBC unveiled today a series of new barrier-free banking services at a branch in Tsuen Wan, aiming to bring more convenient banking services to customers with accessibility needs. Similar barrier-free banking services will be implemented in all branches gradually over the next three years.

The Tsuen Wan Branch has gone through a renovation to modify its existing entrance and counters, as well as install new signage and equipment that help customers with special needs bank in a simpler and more convenient way.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, Diana Cesar, Chief Executive, Hong Kong, HSBC, said “We serve a diverse community in Hong Kong and the accessibility features are designed with our customers’ needs in mind. Today’s launch underscores our commitment to supporting ‘financial inclusion’ in Hong Kong and is only the beginning.”

For easy access, the branch has installed an automated door with call bell for persons seeking assistance, a permanent ramp for wheelchair users and people of impaired mobility.

Inside the branch, there are clear and prominently placed signs showing where key barrier-free facilities are located. Customers with visual impairment can follow tactile guide-paths that mark the safe passage to ATMs. Low level counters and guide-paths with an accessibility symbol have been added. These counters are also equipped with a hearing aid system that reduces surrounding noise to facilitate communications between persons with hearing impairment and bank staff. In the future, all branches will have at least a low level counter or a meeting room for customers with special needs.

A number of enhancements have been made to the ATMs, keeping in mind the needs of persons with visual impairment or other accessibility needs. For example, voice navigation enabled ATMs and Easy ATM service with larger font on screens help people who cannot read properly. Using a headphone on a voice navigation enabled ATM, customers will hear voice prompts that walks them through the steps needed to complete a transaction. Proper height of ATMs for wheelchair users to reach the buttons and withdraw cash is also ensured. By the end of 2018, there will be 250 voice navigation enabled ATMs available across Hong Kong providing greater accessibility for persons with visual impairment.

HSBC also offers braille statement, a statement with tactile writing, for customers with visual impairment.

Besides facility and hardware enhancements, HSBC provides training to staff to help them understand issues that face people with impairments in their daily lives. There are Community Care Ambassadors in every branch who are trained with basic sign language to better assist persons with hearing impairment. Across the branch network, there are a total of 178 Community Care Ambassadors with badges to provide support to customers with accessibility needs and other persons in need.

The Bank has also invested in making digital banking accessible to people with visual impairment. Internationally recognized web accessibility guidelines are adopted in the design of HSBC HK Mobile Banking app and HSBC Personal Internet Banking. Specially-made voice output security device are provided to customers with visual impairment to help them transact on the Bank's internet banking platform, while voice navigation is enabled on the mobile banking app. In June 2018, HSBC HK Mobile Banking app was awarded the Triple Gold Award in the Web Accessibility Recognition Scheme organized by the Office of The Government Chief Information Officer, HKSAR for the adoption of accessibility design in the app.

“It is our pledge to the community to provide convenient, secure and fast access to banking services across a range of platforms, be it physical branches, online or digital. Advances in assistive technologies are certainly making it easier for us to address the needs of users with impairment. As a bank that is rooted in Hong Kong, we will continue to invest and introduce new barrier-free facilities to better serve our customers,” said Ms Cesar.

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Note to editors:

To learn more about HSBC barrier-free banking services, please visit:

<https://youtu.be/XOUTa7i9t5M>

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