

## **Essilor's inclusive business 2.5 NVG celebrates equipping over 10 million people in India with affordable eye care at annual Eye Mitra Convention**

**(Charenton-le-Pont, 9 May 2019) – Essilor announced today that since 2013, its inclusive business, 2.5 New Vision Generation (2.5 NVG), has equipped more than 10 million people from underserved populations in India with glasses and, through its Eye Mitra program, provided over 200 million people with sustainable access to vision care. This announcement confirms 2.5 NVG's significant impact towards the company's ambition to eradicate poor vision by 2050.**

[Eye Mitra](#) (friend of the eyes), 2.5 NVG's flagship inclusive business program and the world's largest rural optical network, is one of the leading contributors to this milestone. To honor their accomplishment, Essilor hosted more than 1,000 Eye Mitras from across India at its 6<sup>th</sup> annual Eye Mitra Convention in Jaipur on 8 May.

Uncorrected poor vision affects 2.5 billion people around the world and has an estimated economic and social impact of \$272 billion per year\*. To address this issue, Eye Mitra was launched in 2013. Through training, skills building and livelihood promotion, the program empowers unemployed and underemployed young people to set up micro enterprises in their rural communities. Trained to conduct basic vision screening and dispense affordable eyeglasses, Eye Mitras create access to vision care where it was not available before. The success of Eye Mitra in India has also led to its expansion and adaptation across the world in markets such as Bangladesh, Kenya and Indonesia – today we have nearly 12,000 primary vision care providers globally.

*"Uncorrected poor vision is the world's most widespread disability and affects 1 in 3 people, 90 per cent of whom live in developing countries where the biggest barriers are access and awareness. Consumers in these countries need tailor-made solutions and products at affordable prices to satisfy their visual needs and aspirations. The Eye Mitra program is one such unique solution,"* said Essilor's Chief Mission Officer, Jayanth Bhuvareghan. *"Innovation and digitization across the board, from products to service delivery to training of our primary vision care providers, is key to creating scale and impact."*

The annual convention is an important moment for Eye Mitras from across India to come together to celebrate their achievements, share their learnings and stories to help motivate and inspire others to develop and grow. The theme of this year's convention looked to the future, showcasing the innovation and digitization that will help equip millions more living in rural areas with the vision correction they need.

*"Our Eye Mitra program in India is truly a global pioneer of rural vision care. It has been replicated across Asia and Africa. The work that they have done to contribute to the 10 million milestone here in India is critical to eradicating poor vision by 2050,"* said Saugata Banerjee, Vice President - Inclusive Business, Philanthropy & Social Impact, Asia, Essilor International.

Essilor aims to create 25,000 primary vision care providers around the world by 2020.

\* 2017 figure

## Note to Editors

### About 2.5 New Vision Generation and the Eye Mitra program

In 2013, Essilor, leading ophthalmic optics company, established its inclusive business 2.5 New Vision Generation (2.5 NVG), to create awareness, develop infrastructure and bring affordable eye care to low income countries which count for 90 per cent of the 2.5 billion people who suffer from uncorrected poor vision globally. Essilor's inclusive business programs impact seven out of 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. These include no poverty, quality educations, gender equality and decent work and economic growth.

2.5 NVG launched its flagship inclusive business program Eye Mitra in India in 2013 as part of its strategy of increasing awareness and access to vision care for underserved populations and at the same time improving their livelihood. Eye Mitra (Hindi for "friend of the eyes") addresses unmet needs for vision care by recruiting and training unemployed and underemployed young people to become primary vision care providers. Similar programs have been launched in Bangladesh and Kenya in 2018 and are known locally as Eye Mitra and Eye Rafiki respectively.

For more information, please visit [www.essilorseechange.com](http://www.essilorseechange.com).

### 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.*

*For more information, please visit [www.essilor.com](http://www.essilor.com)*

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