

**Media Release****9 May 2012****Standard Bank in drive to grow its bancassurance business in Africa**

Standard Bank plans to aggressively grow its bancassurance business in Africa over the next three to five years as it intensifies its operations to take advantage of the growth potential of the continent, says Charmaine Scott, Standard Bank's Head of Bancassurance in Africa.

Ms Scott was a speaker at the 2nd African Bancassurance and Alternative Distribution Conference in Cape Town, where delegates from the continent tackled issues and challenges facing the bancassurance business in Africa. Delegates also discussed the need for innovative distribution strategies to reach the untapped opportunities on the African continent.

"The bancassurance business has come a long way in Africa, from being relatively unknown 10 years ago to being at the centre of most finance institutions' growth strategies. It is now really beginning to take shape and is now an established and growing channel for insurance distribution.

"Compared to the rest of the world, Africa is still in the initial phases of bancassurance but is fast moving into the high-growth phase. The growth we have seen so far is just the tip of the iceberg when we consider the potential that Africa holds," she says.

Ms Scott says the Standard Bank's bancassurance business has grown substantially in the last 10 years, and it has big plans to substantially grow the business in the next three to five years by extending its activities in the 15 countries it currently has bancassurance operations. Outside South Africa, Standard Bank's bancassurance footprint extends to Angola, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

"So far our major focus has largely been on personal market, but we are moving very fast to target business clients as well. We are satisfied with the levels of success achieved thus far, and our approach has largely been to adapt our models to different markets.

"This is because a one-size-fits-all approach does not work for all markets. Our expertise and knowledge of each market requires a unique approach," she says.

Speaking at the conference, she explained the Bank's approach to bancassurance in Africa has been largely based on partnerships with both insurers and brokers with the bank sales platform being used as the customer-facing channel to sell insurance products.

Standard Bank has considered, and utilises, a number of bancassurance models in different markets, depending on the regulatory environments in each.

Similarly, cultural and socio-demographic considerations across African markets also dictate the need for developing appropriate bancassurance models.

Despite this heterogeneity, overall bancassurance penetration has increased in recent years, in most African markets.

She says what makes Africa a compelling case for bancassurance are a number of factors, including the high rates of economic growth in most markets; urbanisation; rising levels of household incomes; low levels of banking and insurance penetration, and the on-going mobile revolution.

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**Issued by:** Magna Carta PR

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