

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHARITIES,
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES AND MUTUAL BENEFIT ORGANISATIONS TO
CONDUCT GENERAL MEETINGS AMID COVID-19**

28 April 2020, Singapore – On 27 April 2020, the Minister for Law issued the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Alternative Arrangements for Meetings for Charities, Co-operative Societies and Mutual Benefit Organisations) Order 2020¹. The Order is intended to help charities, co-operative societies (co-ops), and mutual benefit organisations (MBOs) conduct general meetings through alternative arrangements while complying with prevailing safe distancing measures. These arrangements apply to the period between 27 March 2020² and 30 September 2020.

2. The alternative arrangements are permissive, not mandatory. The new law enables the charities, co-ops and MBOs to conduct their general meetings and allow members to participate and vote in the meetings using the alternative arrangements. Organisations are not obligated to adopt these alternative arrangements. Charities, co-ops and MBOs are encouraged to rely on alternative arrangements to comply with both the letter and spirit of prevailing safe distancing measures. Organisations should ensure that the rights of the members remain intact under these alternative arrangements.

¹ Issued pursuant to Section 27 of the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act 2020 which enables alternative arrangements to be prescribed, by order, for meetings where personal attendance is provided for in written law or certain legal instruments.

² It ensures that rearrangements made to meetings from 27 March 2020 (the date when the Infectious Diseases (Measures to Prevent Spread of COVID-19) Regulations 2020 came into force), are upheld. This includes meetings that were deferred in response to safe distancing measures and meetings that were re-convened after being originally deferred.

3. The alternative arrangements include the following:
 - (a) Meetings may be held, wholly or partly, by electronic means. If necessary, meetings with deadlines that cannot be met notwithstanding these alternative arrangements, may be deferred under the Order to a date no later than 30 September 2020.
 - (b) Charities, co-ops and MBOs may provide that members may attend a meeting by observing and listening to the proceedings of the meeting by electronic means. In such situations, members may vote via proxies using the alternative arrangement stipulated at paragraph 3(e) below.
 - (c) Members may raise matters before the meeting by sending them to the chairman of the meeting by post or by email. Substantial and relevant matters are to be responded to during or before the meeting.
 - (d) A quorum may be formed by members personally or electronically present. A member is deemed to be present if the member has appointed the chairman of the meeting as the member's proxy to attend, speak and vote at the meeting.
 - (e) A member may vote by way of appointing the chairman of the meeting as the member's proxy. Proxy forms shall indicate the member's decision and may be submitted by post or by email.
4. The respective Regulators for all three entities, specifically, the Commissioner of Charities, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, and the Registrar of Mutual Benefit Organisations, will be issuing notices to the charities, co-op and MBO sectors respectively. There will be courses and guides being rolled out in May 2020 on how to conduct general meetings safely during this period in accordance with the new law.

5. Dr Ang Hak Seng, Commissioner of Charities and Executive Director of the Registry of Co-operative Societies and Mutual Benefit Organisations said, “Some charities, co-ops and MBOs may wish to conduct their AGMs but are uncertain as to how to do so. The alternative arrangements prescribed in the Order will help ensure that general meetings can be carried out in accordance with prevailing safe distancing measures. We will conduct online courses to support and guide organisations as well as clarify their queries during this period.”

6. More information can be found via the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg) and the websites of the Registry of Co-operative Societies and Mutual Benefit Organisations (www.mccy.gov.sg/coop) and (www.mccy.gov.sg/mbo).

Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

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Annex A

Charities may refer to the appended list, for the appropriate Order depending on their legal structure.

S/N	Legal Structure of Charity	Name of Order	Order Issuance Date
1	Registered charities established as Companies Limited by Guarantee	COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Alternative Arrangements for Meetings for Companies, Variable Capital Companies, Business Trusts, Unit Trusts and Debenture Holders) Order 2020	13 April 2020
2	Registered charities established as Societies	COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Alternative Arrangements for Meetings for Registered Societies) Order 2020	27 April 2020
3	<p>(a) Registered charities that are set up by way of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charitable trusts • Unincorporated associations (such as charitable funds of co-operatives) • Private Acts <p>(b) All exempt charities except for exempt charities that are statutory boards covered under Public Sector (Governance) Act 2018, and government-aided and independent schools which are</p>	COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Alternative Arrangements for Meetings for Charities, Co-operative Societies and Mutual Benefit Organisations) Order 2020	27 April 2020

S/N	Legal Structure of Charity	Name of Order	Order Issuance Date
	declared as exempt charities		
4	Exempt charities which are government-aided or independent schools	COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Alternative Arrangements for Meetings for Schools) Order 2020	27 April 2020