

MEDIA RELEASE

COMMISSIONER OF CHARITIES OUTLINES MEASURES TO HELP CHARITIES BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION AND UPHOLD PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

13 November 2018 – In the recently released Commissioner of Charities (COC) Annual Report, the COC, Dr Ang Hak Seng, reflects on the work accomplished to enhance the charity regulatory framework and strengthen the sector’s governance capabilities. The Report also highlights that tax-deductible donations bounced back by \$186.3 million to \$1,051.9 million in 2017, after a decline in 2016.

2 Dr Ang said, “A thriving charity sector is like a house with a strong foundation. In today’s dynamic environment, with new modes and platforms of giving, we want to enable and empower charities to build strong foundations of good governance and accountability. We do this through initiatives such as the provision of shared services, increasing public education efforts on safer giving, and strengthening our charity regulatory framework. Together, we can continue to uphold public support for charitable causes, and confidence in the good work of our charities.”

Enhancing the charity regulatory framework

3 A robust and balanced regulatory framework is key to upholding public confidence in the charity sector. The amendments from the Charities Act (Amendment) Bill, passed earlier this year, will be brought into effect progressively. In particular, the revisions to the Charities (Institutions of a Public Character) Regulations are targeted to be rolled out by the end of 2018. In addition, the COC will be introducing regulations on electronic filing of annual submissions to enhance the transparency of charities, and make more information available to the public. As part of the efforts to improve regulatory compliance, the COC will also be streamlining the current reporting

requirements to make it less onerous for charities, without compromising transparency.

Strengthening governance capabilities

4 A key priority of the COC's work is strengthening the governance capabilities of charities, especially the smaller ones. The COC has rolled out various initiatives over the years, including the recent Visibility Guide. Launched on 27 Sep 2018, the Visibility Guide sets out good reporting practices for charities to effectively communicate their impact and accountability to their donors. In addition, the COC has collaborated with umbrella bodies and partnering agencies to provide shared services for small charities, as well as develop toolkits for charities to enhance their governance capabilities.

5 The COC has been building trusted intermediaries and promoting transparency in the giving sphere, for example, through co-developing an industry Code of Practice for Online Charitable Fund-raising Appeals with Singapore's major crowdfunding platforms. To complement these efforts, a nationwide Safer Giving Campaign was launched last month to remind Singaporeans to "Ask, Check, Give". These are three easy steps to build a safer giving space, hold charities accountable to the public and encourage more acts of kindness.

6 The full details of the 2017 COC Annual Report is available on the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg).

The Office of the Commissioner of Charities

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Enclosed

Annex A - Infographic of key statistics

Infographic of key statistics



**2017
AT A
GLANCE**

39

Number of newly registered charities



666

Number of approved IPC

\$16.6 billion

Total annual receipts in FY 2016



\$2.9 billion

Total donations in FY 2016

\$1,051.9 million

↑ Tax-deductible donations up by 186.3 million



Total Tax-deductible donations

\$9.3 million



VWO-Charities Capability Fund used to support the charity sector in FY2012 to FY2016.

REGULATORY MILESTONE

Charities (Amendment) Act 2018



143

Reviews & Investigations



KEY OUTREACH INITIATIVE

Code of Practice for Online Charitable Fund-raising

