

## MEDIA RELEASE

### THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF CHARITIES SEEKS PUBLIC FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CHARITIES ACT

21 August 2017 - The Office of the Commissioner of Charities (“COC”) is seeking public feedback on the proposed amendments to the Charities Act (“the Act”) from 21 August to 11 September 2017.

#### Background

2. The Act was last amended in 2010. As the charity landscape continues to evolve, the Office of the COC has embarked on a review of the Charities Act to ensure that regulatory policies remain relevant, and to enhance the charity sector’s governance standards.

3. As part of the current review, the Office of the COC consulted various stakeholders, including the Charity Council, as well as the five Sector Administrators<sup>1</sup>. The Office also conducted a focus group discussion with charity representatives from across the sectors, to seek views on the proposed amendments.

4. The proposed amendments to the Act aim to further enhance the accountability of charities and fund-raisers in Singapore. In addition, the COC will have stronger regulatory powers to discharge his duties so as to maintain public trust and confidence in the charity sector.

#### Summary of Key Proposed Amendments

5. The key features of the proposed amendments to the Act are as follows:

***(a) Enhancing the Regulatory Framework to Increase Accountability of Charities and Fund-Raisers***

The proposed amendments will enhance and update the disqualification regime under the Act; whereby individuals meeting specified criteria rendering them unfit to hold key positions in charities will be barred from doing so. Other

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<sup>1</sup> The five sector administrators are: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social and Family Development, People’s Association and Sport Singapore

changes include clarifying the type of penalties that may be imposed for the contravention of regulations concerning Institutions of a Public Character, prescribing enabling provisions to mandate the electronic filing of annual submissions and other regulatory submissions by charities for greater transparency, and clarifying the definition of “fund-raising appeal” in the Act.

**(b) Enhancing Regulatory Powers**

The COC’s powers will be enhanced so that he can better regulate charities and fund-raising appeals in Singapore. The amendments being proposed include broadening the COC’s authority to remove and suspend unfit individuals from their positions in a charity, empowering the COC to suspend improper fund-raising appeals, and enhancing his powers to call for documents and information.

**Invitation for Feedback**

6. The public can view the proposed amendments to the Act at the Charity Portal ([www.charities.gov.sg](http://www.charities.gov.sg)) or REACH ([www.reach.gov.sg](http://www.reach.gov.sg)). Comments and feedback can be sent to either of the following channels by 11 September 2017:

- Email to: [MCCY\\_Charities@mccy.gov.sg](mailto:MCCY_Charities@mccy.gov.sg)
- Post to: Office of the Commissioner of Charities  
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth  
140 Hill Street, #02-00  
Old Hill Street Police Station  
Singapore 179369  
Subject: “Consultation on Draft Charities (Amendment) Bill 2017”.

Office of the Commissioner of Charities  
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth  
21 August 2017

**For media queries, please contact:**

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