

MEDIA RELEASE

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS HIT \$1.4 BILLION IN SG50 YEAR AS CHARITIES CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY

The 2015 annual report by the Office of the Commissioner of Charities (COC) stated that tax-deductible donations rose by more than 24% to \$1.4 billion in 2015. This was largely spurred by the increase in tax deduction from 250% to 300% to encourage more charitable giving in celebration of Singapore's Golden Jubilee. The report, released today, also highlighted various collaborations by the Office of the COC and its partners to strengthen governance standards and transparency practices of charities.

2 “Our mission is to build a well-governed and thriving charity sector with strong public confidence. To achieve this, we are committed to working with all charities and partners to uphold good standards of governance and transparency.” said Mr Low Puk Yeong, COC

Enhancing transparency and accountability in the charity sector

3 To encourage good disclosure practices among charities, the Office of the COC worked closely with the Charity Council to develop the **Charity Transparency Framework** (CTF). The CTF, a self-assessment scorecard for charities, was introduced in July 2015. Charities which are assessed to have exemplary disclosure practices using the CTF will be recognised at the inaugural Charity Transparency Awards in September 2016.

4 The Office of the COC also made available Annual Reports and Governance Evaluation Checklists of registered charities for public viewing via the Charity Portal in December 2015. This follows the move to make charities' financial statements publicly available via the Charity Portal in 2014. These initiatives represent the COC's commitment to enhance transparency and accountability in the sector.

Protecting charities from terrorist financing abuse

5 An area of focus for the Office of the COC in 2015 was to sensitise charities to the risks of being used as a channel for terrorist financing. In May 2015, the Office of the COC published a guide - "***Protecting Your Charity Against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing***" on the Charity Portal. Subsequently, the Office of the COC held targeted engagement sessions with charities. This is to raise their understanding of the safeguards and due diligence measures which could protect their organisations from such risks. Strong co-ordination networks were also established between the Office of the COC and other government agencies to facilitate information sharing and collaboration.

6 The Office of the COC will continue to apply focused and proportionate measures, in line with a risk-based approach, to protect the sector from any potential abuse. The measures will take into consideration our local context and the TF risk exposure in Singapore.

Looking Ahead

7 The Office of the COC will continue to work with partners to help charities strengthen their capabilities and raise their governance standards. This includes the review of the Charities Act, the Code of Governance and other public education efforts to promote informed giving.

8 The latest COC Annual Report is available on the Charity Portal (<http://www.charities.gov.sg>).

The Office of the Commissioner of Charities

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