

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SAFER GIVING ONLINE

Industry Code of Practice co-developed with the Commissioner of Charities to uphold standards of transparency and accountability

23 January 2018, Singapore – Four major crowdfunding platforms in Singapore have committed to adopting an industry Code of Practice for Online Charitable Fund-raising Appeals, co-developed with the Commissioner of Charities. The platforms are Give.asia, Giving.sg, The Ray of Hope Initiative Limited and SimplyGiving.

2. This was announced by Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu at the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre’s inaugural Giving Matters Forum. Minister Fu said, “I am heartened by the industry’s support for the Code of Practice. Donors must also do their part to hold fundraisers accountable, by asking questions on the legitimacy of the appeal even when exercising their generosity. This underscores the need for co-regulation, where everyone has a part to play in encouraging safer online giving.”

3. The Code of Practice is a set of best practices for crowdfunding platforms in Singapore. The Code is based on ensuring the legitimacy; accountability, and transparency of charitable appeals¹ hosted on these platforms.

4. As part of the Code, online fundraisers will be required to complete a declaration of compliance with the fund-raising regulations under the Charities Act², such as the duty to make accurate representations to donors, maintain proper records of donations, and to use donations according to the intended purpose. Please refer to [Annex B](#) for the principles of the Code of Practice.

5. The Code of Practice and list of platforms that abide by it will be published on the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg). If a platform breaches the Code of Practice, its name will be removed from the list. In addition, the areas found in breach of the Code by the platform may be stated on the website.

¹ Charitable appeals refer to fund-raising appeals for charitable, benevolent, or philanthropic purposes.

² All fund-raising appeals (including those conducted online) in Singapore for charitable, benevolent, or philanthropic purposes are regulated under the Charities (Fund-raising Appeals for Local and Foreign Charitable Purposes) Regulations 2012.

Enclosed:

Annex A – Quotes by Crowdfunding Platforms that subscribe to the Code of Practice
Annex B – The Code of Practice for Online Charitable Fund-raising Appeals

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Annex A

QUOTES BY CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS THAT SUBSCRIBE TO THE CODE

Crowdfunding Platforms	Attributed to	Quote
Giving.sg	Andy Sim, Director, Digital Innovation, National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre	We welcome the opportunity to work with the Commissioner of Charities and trusted partners on the Code of Practice as we've seen the need for an industry-led code of practice due to the ever-evolving nature of the online fundraising landscape. It is therefore important to ensure the guidelines reflect best practices to ensure high levels of accountability and transparency, and to maintain public trust and confidence. We will continue to work closely with the COC on this initiative.
Give.Asia	Aseem K Thakur, Co-founder of GIVE.asia	<p>GIVE.asia welcomes the Code of Practice as it brings more transparency and trust to the online giving space. We believe that as trust increases, more people will donate and more worthy causes will get supported which is a great outcome.</p> <p>GIVE.asia's mission is to be the most trusted, safe and easy-to-use giving platform. We are very excited to be championing the Code to continue staying true to our mission and unlocking the generosity that we believe is within all of us.</p>
SimplyGiving	Nikki Kinloch, CEO, SimplyGiving	SimplyGiving welcomes the Code of Practice being implemented by the Commissioner of Charities. As one of the largest fundraising platforms in Asia, we pride ourselves on being clear, transparent and accountable

Crowdfunding Platforms	Attributed to	Quote
		to our fundraisers, donors and charities. This new Code aligns with our operating principles and sets a clear standard across the charity and giving landscape in Singapore.
The Ray of Hope Initiative Limited (ROHI)	Danny Yong, Chairman, ROHI	ROHI is pleased to be part of the Code of Practice as accountability and transparency are two of our core principles. We believe the Code's guidelines will help ensure that fund raising causes are genuine, and hence give donors in Singapore peace of mind when donating online.

Annex B

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ONLINE CHARITABLE FUND-RAISING APPEALS

The Code advocates the following best practices:

- (a) that subscribers to the Code will put in place systems, processes and procedures to ensure that user information is kept safe and secure and that it remains accessible in the event that the subscriber ceases to operate;
- (b) that subscribers will ensure **transparency on funds raised** and that the public can freely access the following information on the subscribers' crowdfunding platforms:
 - i. regular updates of funds collected by virtue of any charitable fund-raising appeal conducted on the crowdfunding platforms while the appeal is ongoing;
 - ii. the total funds collected after a charitable fund-raising appeal has ended;
 - iii. maintain proper records of donations received;
 - iv. information of past, present and ongoing charitable fund-raising appeals;
 - v. that subscribers will ensure that the Terms and Conditions applicable to a charitable fund-raising appeal are published on the crowdfunding platform for public access, with clear explanations on:
 - a. how the donation process works;
 - b. the duties and responsibilities of the subscribers;
 - c. the due diligence that has been undertaken by the subscribers; and
 - d. the nature and amount of fees and charges which apply;
- (c) that subscribers require the persons conducting charitable fund-raising appeals (hereinafter referred to as "fund-raisers") using the subscribers' crowdfunding platforms to complete a declaration of compliance with the requirements under the Charities Act of Singapore relating to charitable fund-raising appeals, in such terms as may be proposed by the COC in consultation with the subscribers;
- (d) that subscribers put in place systems and processes for early fraud and mismanagement detection and to ensure **legitimacy of appeals**, such as:
 - i. development and application of a verification process of personal identification of fund-raisers and beneficiaries via submission of documents to substantiate the appeal;
 - ii. development and application of policies and procedures for detection of more sophisticated attempts at fraud; and

- iii. regular reviews and testing of policies and procedures and prompt fixing of flaws as they become known;

- (e) that subscribers make available on their crowdfunding platforms the descriptions of the general risks related to donations made via such platforms;

- (f) that subscribers evaluate risks associated with Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (with reference to the guidance issued by the COC in May 2015 titled “Protecting Your Charity Against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing”, as amended from time to time) and have in place adequate systems, processes and procedures to address such risks; and

- (g) that subscribers liaise closely with the COC and co-operate on the conduct of periodic audits and reviews of the subscribers’ systems and processes to ensure they are in accordance with the Code.