

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY DR GERARD EE, CHAIRMAN,
CHARITY COUNCIL AT THE CHARITY TRANSPARENCY AND
GOVERNANCE AWARDS 2022 ON 9 NOVEMBER 2022,
7.20PM AT SINGAPORE CHINESE CULTURAL CENTRE, FAR
EAST ORGANISATION AUDITORIUM (LEVEL 9)**

Mr Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community & Youth and
Second Minister for Law

Mr Desmond Chin, Commissioner of Charities (COC)

Fellow members of the Charity Council

Distinguished Guest

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

1. A very good evening to all of you. First and foremost, let me extend my warmest congratulations to all award recipients. I am indeed delighted to welcome you today to the Charity Transparency and Governance Awards 2022! It is great to see all of you gathered here in person and tuning in online.

2. We are also privileged to have with us Minister Edwin Tong joining us here today to present the awards. Thank you, Minister, for your time and support.

Tribute to the Charities

3. The Charity Transparency and Governance Awards was last held in 2019. The awards took a hiatus in 2020 and 2021 for the review of the Charity Transparency Framework, and also for the charities to prioritise their resources on more urgent COVID-19 work.
4. The Awards is one of the Charity Council's key initiatives to promote and reiterate the importance of transparency and good governance in the sector.
5. The Awards recognise the exemplary efforts of the charities and encourage other charities to strive towards excellence in governance so as to build a thriving charity sector.

Charities Must Embrace Transparency And Practice Good Governance

6. Transparency is a key component of good governance. It is important in ensuring public trust and confidence in the charity sector. One way to build trust is to disclose detailed

and clear information of the charity to help stakeholders understand the charity better.

7. How to do it, you may ask.
8. My advice is 'Tell your story'. Effective communication and sharing of charities' work, programmes and activities, allow people to have confidence in the work you do. With this, more stakeholders will come forward to support and help the charity. All of you must remember, people do not support the organizations. They only support the causes and outcome the charity achieved. So tell your story, tell it very clearly and simply so that people will get excited over your achievements and give you further supports.
9. It is heartening to know that there are 27%¹ more charities receiving the Charity Transparency Awards this year. This indicates that more charities understand the importance of transparency and are putting in effort to put in place good transparency practices.
10. The winners here today are the top 40% of the participating charities. They have detailed information displayed in its annual report, financial statements, governance evaluation checklist and website.

¹ In 2019, there are 67 winners. In 2022, there are 85 winners. Increase in 18 winners.

11. Do not be disheartened if you did not win the CTA award this year. It does not mean that you did not do well but there is always room for improvement. Work on these areas and you will be back stronger for the award.
12. I encourage charities to learn from one another and see how information can be clearly communicated to your stakeholders. Start your journey in practicing good disclosure now; and I hope to see more charities attaining good transparency standards over time.
13. Good governance is essential to a charity's success. When charities are well-governed, public trust in the charity sector is strengthened, there will be strong support from all stakeholders, from funding to volunteer time, skills and knowledge.
14. Governance involves implementing systems and processes to ensure that your charity achieves its charitable objects, comply with legal requirements and is managed in an effective and efficient way.

15. Good governance is something that all charities should strive to achieve. This will help to affirm public trust and confidence in each charity and create a standard of excellence in the charity sector as a whole.
16. Due to COVID-19, the past few years have not been easy for many charities. I applaud the winners of the Charity Governance Awards and Special Commendation Awards, who have adopted the highest standards of governance despite challenging times.
17. Good governance and transparency are essential to the sustainability and growth of the charity sector. I would like to encourage charities, regardless of your sector and sizes, to participate in the awards assessment process. I believe it will be a good learning opportunity and your charity will benefit from the rigorous assessment.

Review of Code of Governance – A Principle Based Code

18. In Minister's speech earlier, he has shared that the revised Code of Governance will be launched in early 2023. The first Governance Evaluation Checklist submission based on the new Code will be only due in June 2025.

19. The Code of Governance was first developed in 2007 and last refined in 2015. The Code sets out principles and best practices in key areas of governance and management which charities are encouraged to adopt.
20. To keep up with the changing charity landscape and increasingly sophisticated donors who want greater transparency and accountability by the charities, as well as to enable informed giving decisions, we thought that it is timely for the Code to be re-evaluated.
21. The charity sector has matured significantly over the years. It is ready for a principle-based Code which allows different sectors to exercise greater flexibility in applying the Code to address their sector specific needs. It also encourages the charities to undertake a more thorough review of their governance standards by a deeper understanding of the underlying principles, instead of it being just a “ticking the guidelines” exercise.
22. This revised Code will provide greater clarity and relevance about good governance and encourages charities to think through if their actions are aligned with the overarching principles.

23. As mentioned by Minister, to support the implementation of the revised Code, the Charity Council will work with the Office of the Commissioner of Charities and partners to conduct learning sessions and develop resources.
24. To familiarize yourself with the revised Code, I strongly encourage the charities to join the training sessions which will be held in 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2023.
25. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Code of Governance Sub-Committee led by Mr Ang Hao Yao and joined by 11 members representing the various sectors. They have held numerous meetings to deliberate on key issues and provide greater clarity to the existing guidelines.

Appreciation to Our Partners

26. Lastly, I would like to thank the Singapore Management University, The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) Singapore, EY, as well as the independent judges for supporting the awards assessment process.
27. We thank you for availing your time and invaluable insights in making the judging process a robust one; and we truly value your support for the charity sector over the years.

28. We are also extremely thankful for the support from our sponsor, Mr Ang Hao Yao who contributed to part of the prize money tonight. Thank you Hao Yao.

Conclusion

29. Thank you everyone for making time to celebrate this special occasion with us this evening.

30. On behalf of the Charity Council, I wish all of you every success as you continue to dedicate yourselves to the pursuit of governance excellence.

31. Have an enjoyable evening ahead.

32. Thank you and God Bless.

(Estimated Word Count: 1,185 (excluding headers))