

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MS THERESA GOH, CHAIRMAN,
CHARITY COUNCIL AT THE CHARITY TRANSPARENCY AND
GOVERNANCE AWARDS 2024 ON 14 NOVEMBER 2024, AT
PARKROYAL COLLECTION, MARINA BAY, GARDEN BALLROOM**

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

Mr Desmond Chin, Commissioner of Charities (COC)

Fellow members of the Charity Council

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

1. Good evening, everyone. It's my privilege to address you on this joyous occasion as we celebrate the Charity Transparency and Governance Awards 2024 winners.
2. First and foremost, congratulations to **all 138 award recipients** tonight. Your commitment sets a stellar example for the sector, demonstrating that high standards enhance the impact of your work.

3. Your achievements are not just recognition of excellent practices but a challenge to continue raising the bar. You inspire others to follow suit with your leadership. Do share your journey and best practices to elevate the sector.
4. To those who participated but did not receive an award, your efforts are equally valuable. Do view this as a stepping stone towards excellence.

Charity Transparency Dedication Award

5. This year, we celebrate more charities participating in the Awards program.
6. Out of the 138 winners, we acknowledge charities that continuously strive to improve, even without achieving the highest recognition. Tonight, 29 charities will receive the Charity Transparency Dedication Award which recognizes their commitment and tenacity.

Review of Charity Transparency and Governance Awards

7. I mentioned last year that we will be reviewing the Charity Transparency Framework and the Awards process. Moving forward, the awards ceremony will be held every two years.
8. These awards are not about flaunting accomplishments. They are about deep appreciation and noble recognition of the collective effort and dedication of our charities. It is true humility for more charities to step up and share their success stories. By doing so, you inspire others and contribute to the collective goal of excellence in the charity sector.

9. The Charity Council will review the terminology of the Awards to reflect this intent. It's not about optional accolades but about foundational practices that ensure transparency, accountability, and effectiveness.
10. While the next Awards ceremony will be held beyond 2025, we will take this time to work with our partners to prepare the charities. We will soon embark on developing a framework to better evaluate charities' governance standards in today's context.
11. More details of the framework will be shared next year. A robust framework is only possible with strong ground support and feedback. Hence, I strongly encourage all charities to participate in the pilot programme next year and share your thoughts with us.

Updates on Charities Life Cycle Survey and Essential Board Training Programmes

12. Last month at the Charity Governance Conference, I shared about the Charities Life Cycle Survey that was conducted with Ernst & Young Advisory.
13. Over 400 charities, across all sizes and sub-sectors have responded to the survey and the results indicated that close to two-thirds of the respondents are at the "Maturity" stage of the life cycle. These charities display the following characteristics:
 - a. Programmes are carried out with **defined policies, processes and structures**. They are documented, approved by the Board and reviewed periodically.

- b. Programmes are monitored against **pre-defined measures of impact and outcome** and are reported to the Board. **Various feedback channels are established** to gather feedback on charities' programmes.
- c. Governing board is comprised of **independent board members** and the **skillsets and experiences** among board members **are complementary**.
- d. The organisation has **a structured training plan** which is adhered to.

- 14. It is heartening to note from the results that charities are upholding good governance practices across all life cycles. For instance, some of the charities in the "Start-up" stage have obtained full marks in their Governance Evaluation Checklist, along with charities in the "Maturity" stage.
- 15. With these results, we will have a better understanding of our charities and offer tailored resources and services to meet the needs. We will use the findings from the survey to curate training programs that Boards and Management can attend depending on the stage of their life cycle.
- 16. Beyond basic governance training, we like charities to stay up to date with best practices in key areas such as financial stewardship, ethics, impact reporting and communications which are crucial for maintaining trust and credibility with both public and private stakeholders.
- 17. We will share the full analysis of the Life Cycle Survey and details of the curated essential training programmes in the coming months and I look forward to your attendance in 2025.

Appreciating Our Partners

18. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the success of the Charity Transparency and Governance Awards 2024, including Singapore Management University, The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) Singapore, Ernst and Young (EY), and the CGA judges:

- Mr. Neo Sing Hwee
- Mr. Tay Woon Teck
- Mr. Dickson Lim
- Mr. Suhaimi Zainul-Abidin
- Professor Lan Luh Luh

19. We are also grateful for the support from our sponsor, Mr. Ang Hao Yao.

Conclusion

20. Congratulations once again to our winners. Have a wonderful evening.