

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF CHARITIES FOR 2002

REGISTRATION

Every organisation established exclusively for charitable purposes (other than those exempted) must apply to the Commissioner of Charities for registration under the Charities Act. Charitable purposes include the relief of poverty, the advancement of education or religion and other purposes beneficial to the community.

During the year 2002, 167 charities were registered (including those applications received in previous years), bringing the total number of charities in Singapore to 1,564 as at 31 December 2002 (the Appendix shows the breakdown by charitable objectives).

COMMISSIONER'S ORDERS

Under the Charities Act, the Commissioner may issue orders to facilitate the proper administration of charities. Four orders were issued last year.

One order under Section 30(1) was granted to the Hoon San Temple authorising the Trustees to sell off the temple's vacant property and to apply the sales proceeds to upgrade their existing temple and pay for its maintenance. Another order was granted to the Trustees of Cheng Liam Um Vegetarian Temple to sell their premises in an en bloc sale to a property developer as the sale was in the interest of the temple. The other order was issued to the Asian Women's Welfare Association to empower their Trustees to let out its vacant premises and apply the rental proceeds to their welfare projects.

One order under Section 31(2) was issued to authorise the Trustees of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery to petition to Court. The Court Order was sought to convey the temple property that was vested in them to the Monastery, a company limited by guarantee. This would cut down administrative overheads and expenses, as the property then need not be transferred every time there is a change of trustees.

FUND-RAISING APPEALS FOR FOREIGN CHARITABLE PURPOSES

37 permits were issued in the year to allow fund-raising appeals for foreign charitable purposes. The appeals were made primarily to raise funds for humanitarian projects such as providing aid to the Afghan war victims, the Palestinian refugees, the earthquake victims in Iran, the flood victims in China and the needy in East Timor, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Myanmar.

FIELD VISITS

Every year, our officers would visit selected charities to better understand their operations and to advise them on areas for improvement. 5 field visits were carried out in 2002 to help the charities comply with the requirements of the Charities Act.

DEVELOPMENTS IN 2002

A new brochure entitled “Donations and Tax Deductions” was distributed to charities to help facilitate their fund raising efforts.

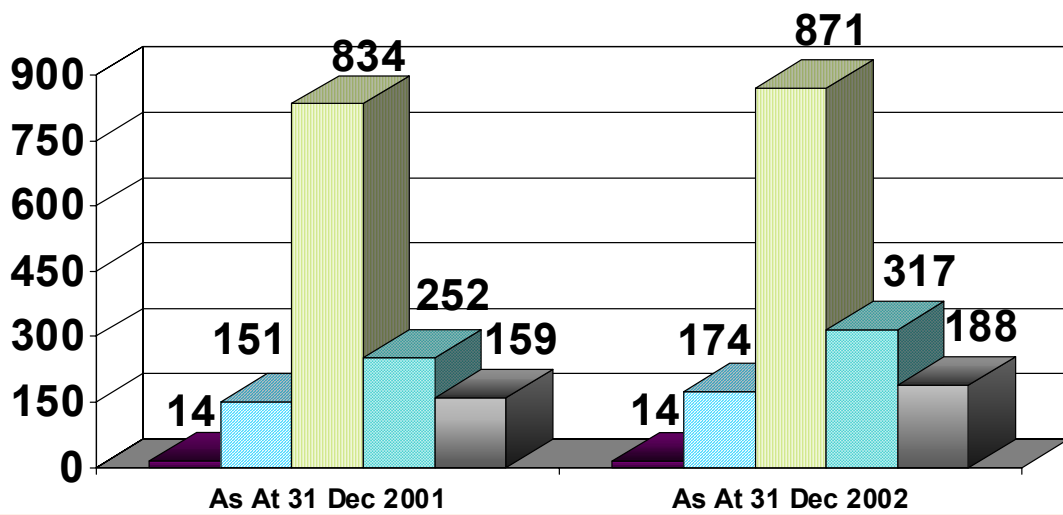
To promote transparency and accountability to donors and members of the public, charities are required to post their key financial and non-financial information on their websites. This exercise is being carried out in phases. Phase 1 for Institutions

of a Public Character (charities authorised to collect tax-deductible donations) was completed at the end of December 2002. Phase 2 will commence in 2003.

PLANS FOR 2003

We shall continue to work with the Ministry of Finance to further improve charity governance and to promote best practices among charities.

**Number of Registered Charities
(by charitable objectives)**



- Relief of Poverty
- Advancement of religion
- Multiple objectives
- Advancement of education
- Purposes beneficial to the community