

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY CHARITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN
MRS FANG AI LIAN
AT THE 2ND CHARITY COUNCIL NETWORKING SEMINAR ON
11 MARCH 2010 AT 6:00PM
NCSS AUDITORIUM**

Friends and Colleagues from
Charities, IPCs and professional associations
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here this evening for the second Charity Council Networking Seminar. I believe everyone here has the same goal in mind, that is, to discuss and to find ways of serving the community and our beneficiaries better and more effectively. In collaboration with the Social Service Training Institute (SSTI), the Charity Council hopes that through these seminars, charities, professional associations, experts and fellow practitioners will be brought together to exchange best practices on governance, and friendships will be forged along the way.

Talent Management and Retention in An Economic Upturn

2. It is indeed heartening to see so many board members and management personnel at today's seminar. The inaugural networking seminar held in May last year addressed how charities could cope in the midst of the economic recession. Now, the global economy is on the way to recovery and charities are once again faced with a set of challenges. This time round however – charities face challenges of talent management and retention.

3. As the economy improves, we can expect the labour market to tighten as more people are drawn to better paying jobs in the for-profit sector. Volunteers may commit less time to charities as they get busier with their full-time jobs. However, I believe it is not a bleak situation. We can be hopeful that there are still people and organisations that continue to be passionate about charitable causes.

4. Charities, of course, have to do their part as well. In this regard, it is of concern that many charities, almost 40% of those that submitted the online Governance Evaluation checklist in FY2008, do not have

documented human resource policies. Neither do they have systems for regular supervision, appraisal and personal development for staff or key volunteers.

5. We hope this seminar will help to address the importance of attracting, retaining and developing our leadership and manpower talent for the longer term, whether they are Directors, paid staff or volunteers. Our speakers from Bain and Deloitte will speak on talent and leadership development and management for charities.

6. Focusing on talent at the leadership level, Ms Chew Seow Chien and Mr Sebastien Lamy from Bain will share with us on the important role that the board assumes in the leadership and governance of a charity. It is therefore critical for charities to improve the recruitment,

renewal and succession planning for the boards. With the right leaders in place, charities should also grow the key competencies of these leaders by looking into leadership development. Effective board evaluations can improve transparency in the charities, making it easier to recruit and retain board members.

7. Ms Iris Tee from Deloitte will explore work force planning as part of a talent management strategy. She will also share on the process of talent renewal for strategic and critical roles within a charity.

8. The Charity Council recognises the importance of training in the development and management of talent. With the support of MCYS, the charity sector has access to a \$45 million VWOs-Charities Capability Fund, or VCF, to help build up their governance and management

capabilities. Some 700 charities and IPCs have already tapped on the VCF for training, consultancy and other capability building projects, and I would encourage everyone to make full use of the available funding. Since January last year, the Council has also launched e-learning programmes on Board Governance in conjunction with the Social Service Training Institute (SSTI). This would allow busy charity board members and senior management staff to learn at their own time and pace.

Optimising Resources through Shared Services

9. In addition, to help charities optimise their resources, the Charity Council appointed ST Electronics (e-Services) to develop a Shared Services Programme called iServe to deliver finance, accounting, payroll and procurement shared services for the charity sector. iServe which stands for **I**ntegrated **S**hared-**s**ervices for **E**xcellence was launched in September 2009.

10. By outsourcing their finance and accounting functions, charities can free up their limited manpower and channel them toward their programmes and services. This can also lower the risk of governance lapses in individual charities as finance and accounting processes are

now managed by an independent and professional shared services provider. More importantly, board members can focus on governance roles. With good governance and proper processes in place, charities can then better attract and retain talented professionals as board members, staff and volunteers. This is an aspect of good talent management.

11. To date, 16 organisations have signed up for shared services and some 61 other organisations are in discussion with the iServe team. The Singapore Association for the Visually Handicapped is one of earliest organisations to have signed up with iServe. At the end of today's programme, they will be sharing with us their experience with iServe thus far. I would like to encourage more charities and IPCs to consider signing up for shared services.

Refinement of the Code of Governance for Charities and IPCs

12. I would also like to take this opportunity to announce that the Charity Council will be refining the Code of Governance to provide charities with greater clarity on the Code guidelines. We have formed three working groups, involving the various practitioners and stakeholders of the charity sector, including representatives from charities and IPCs, grantmakers, professional bodies, academics and auditors, to refine the different sections of the Code. In response to feedback from charities over the past two years, the working groups will discuss and look into ways of clarifying some of the Code guidelines. We will also be developing practical policy guides and templates for use by charities.

13. We hope the refined Code would provide charities with greater clarity on governance best practices and help resolve difficulties at the operational level. We aim to complete the exercise and publish the refined Code by the end of the year.

Tan Chin Tuan-SSTI Award

14. Today, I am also very pleased to note that six young adults will be receiving the Tan Chin Tuan-SSTI Award. Since 2009, the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation has pledged \$15,000 annually to the Social Service Training Institute (SSTI) to recognise students who have the passion to make a difference to the community in pursuing an education in social service fields. I hope that these six award winners will continue to contribute to the charity sector in future and encourage peers to do a part for charity as well.

Conclusion

15. Robert Collier¹ once remarked, "The great successful men of the world have used their imagination...they think ahead and create their mental picture in all its details, filling in here, adding a little there, altering this a bit and that a bit, but steadily building - steadily building." In the same way, I believe our charity sector will be successful if each charity thinks ahead and builds up its capacity by rightly nurturing, managing and retaining its talent pool.

16. Our staff and our volunteers are essential. Without them, charities cannot do good and cannot help our beneficiaries effectively. I hope that all of us here will use this seminar as a platform to discuss and explore ways of improving how we manage and develop leaders and talent in the charity sector.

I wish all of you a very fruitful seminar. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Collier (1885-1950), was a prolific writer and progressive publisher. As an author of self-help and New Thought metaphysical books in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he was one of America's original success authors.