

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MRS THERESA FOO, SBF FOUNDATION CHAIRMAN, AT
THE OPENING CEREMONY OF SBF and SBFF OFFICES ON 5 SEPT 2017**

Thank you, Michel.

- Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong,
 - Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry) Mr S. Iswaran,
 - Minister in Prime Minister's Office and Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress Mr Chan Chun Sing,
 - Senior Ministers of State for Trade and Industry Ms Sim Ann and Dr Koh Poh Koon,
 - Senior Parliamentary Secretary Ms Low Yen Ling,
 - Excellencies,
 - Distinguished Guests,
 - Ladies and Gentlemen,
1. Good morning and a very warm welcome to this opening ceremony of the SBF and SBF Foundation offices.
 2. The SBF Foundation was set up in response to our Prime Minister's call for businesses to be more active and engaged in the areas of corporate philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and to foster a more inclusive society.

SBF Foundation – An Overview

3. Our vision is “To foster a compassionate and proactive business community, playing its part to build an inclusive Singapore”. Our objectives are: 1) To champion and multiply the efforts of the business community in corporate social responsibility and corporate giving; and, 2) To promote the welfare and employability in the workforce of disadvantaged persons, specifically, low wage workers, low income families, persons with disabilities and youths-at-risk.
4. To date, we have worked with 7 partner organisations and engaged 515 companies. Through our 10 programmes, we have committed total funding of S\$3.2 million and benefitted more than 1,000 beneficiaries in the last three years.

Our Projects

5. Now, I would like to give you an update on the key programmes we have supported.
6. In creating a more inclusive workforce, we have worked with 3 different partners.
7. First was SG Enable for Project IN which enhanced the employability of young adults with intellectual disability and mild autism through a 9-month internship. The two-year pilot programme was completed in 2016 and has helped 36 beneficiaries. We are glad that the Government will take over the funding of Project IN after the successful completion of the pilot programme.

8. With our second partner, the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), we have three programmes which include the Overseas Industrial Attachment Programme, The SBF Foundation Global Education Programme Award, and The SBF Foundation Training Awards at culinary Institut Paul Bocuse. More than 150 students from ITE have benefited from these three programmes.
9. Thirdly, the SBF Foundation Scholarship at the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) was launched in 2015 to nurture engineering and design talent for the business community in Singapore and the region. To date, 12 deserving students have received the scholarship. In fact, our emcee today, Ms Michel Sim, is one of our first SBF Foundation – SUTD scholars.
10. In addition, we also support the youth and disadvantaged children through the Equestrian Federation of Singapore's programme, EQUAL-ARK, where they gain life skills through horse therapy. This programme has benefitted over 1,000 children over the three years.
11. To promote corporate giving and CSR, we officially launched Company of Good in partnership with the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) in June last year. To date, close to 1,000 companies have joined the movement to gain a better understanding of their existing giving profiles, as well as to build their knowledge, capabilities and network.

Going Forward

12. Going forward, the key programme will be for us to work with NVPC on Company of Good that will allow companies to begin and enhance their giving journeys.
13. The Foundation will also start a new project with SG Enable on an Inclusive Index to allow a more holistic measurement of employers' inclusiveness, in terms of their efforts to hire Persons with Disabilities. Data from the Index will then be used to develop an Inclusive Trustmark.
14. We have in 2017 signed on a new partner, the New Hope Community Services, to create a job support and retention programme to enhance the long-term employability of the homeless.
15. SBF Foundation is committed to continually explore new strategic partnerships to fulfil our mission to encourage, enable and enhance the contributions of the business community to the social, vocational and educational upliftment of all in Singapore. We would like to urge SBF member companies and the business community to come forward and provide opportunities for our beneficiaries.

A Note of Thanks

16. All these could not have been achieved without the support of our partners, donors and the business community. We are truly grateful to

you for journeying with us in the past four yours. Together, we look forward to building an inclusive Singapore that we can all be proud of.

17. On behalf of our beneficiaries and their families, I would like to thank all our Donors especially our Founding Donors for seeding the Foundation. Thank you for believing in us and our mission. Special mention goes to our Principal Founding Donor, Mr Philip Ng of Far East Organization. Thank you, Philip, for gifting us this new home.
18. Today's opening ceremony would not have been possible without the support of our two programme partners, ITE and SUTD. We would like to thank ITE for putting in place the Augmented Reality display which you can view at the foyer, and it's graduates, Mr. Wang Junyong and Ms. Elizabeth Loh, for the Taiko drum performance. Also, a special thanks to SUTD for creating the launch mechanism and putting together the special performace by its acapella group, Vocomotives.

Conclusion

19. In closing, thank you Prime Minister Lee, Minister Iswaran, and all our distinguished guests for your presence today.
20. I wish you an enjoyable afternoon.