

OPENING ADDRESS BY MR HSIEH FU HUA, SBF FOUNDATION CHAIRMAN, AT THE LAUNCH OF PROJECT MIGRANTWELL

Date: 29 November 2021

Time: 06.00pm

Venue: SBF Center

Guest-of-Honour, Senior Minister, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam,
Special Guests, Minister for Manpower, Dr. Tan See Leng and
Senior Minister of State for Health and Manpower. Dr Koh Poh Koon,
Chairman of Singapore Business Federation, Mr Lim Ming Yan,
Distinguished SBF Members and Partners,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Introduction

1. A very good evening to everyone and thank you for making time to join us. It is my pleasure to welcome you to this significant milestone for the Singapore Business Federation Foundation. As the social impact arm of SBF, we are focused on promoting a compassionate business community that supports our workforce as well as the community at large.
2. We have just enjoyed the lively performance from the talented band. The performing members are migrant workers who have travelled far from home and family to earn a living here. Like all of us, our migrant workers have felt the crushing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, unlike many of us, accessing medical care and financial support does not come as easily for them.
3. Despite the good support by the government and multiple initiatives by NGOs so far, there is still more to do in taking care of the physical and mental well-being of our migrant workers. We are aware that they face certain issues in this regard. Besides unaffordability, limited employer support, anxiety over loss of job, there is also poor health awareness.

4. In this regard, we are most pleased to be gathered here with you today to inaugurate the launch of MigrantWell Singapore which seeks to address these concerns and improve the accessibility to primary healthcare for our migrant workers.

MigrantWell Singapore

5. This Project was conceived by many parties who are present here. The two families of the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat and the Estate of Ng Teng Fong were moved by the plight of migrant workers in Singapore during the pandemic last year. Recognising their need for better health, the two Estates brought together SBF Foundation, the Ministry of Manpower, and St Andrew's Mission Hospital, and also generously donated \$10 million each to launch MigrantWell Singapore.
6. On our part, SBF Foundation is pledging another \$15 million collectively from our members to support this cause and lead MigrantWell Singapore as an independent charity to address the health and well-being of Singapore's migrant workers.
7. We will partner St Andrew's Mission Hospital to set up St Andrew's Migrant Worker Medical Centre at Penjuru. This regional medical centre will be a one-stop primary care facility for our migrant workers to access a broader range of services, including radio imaging, dental, telehealth, and counselling. Also, MigrantWell Singapore will partner other community agencies to identify care gaps of our migrant workers and provide support from a MigrantWell Welfare Fund.
8. Through MigrantWell Singapore, SBF Foundation will expand our reach into the migrant worker community, a key part of our workforce that forms the backbone of many of our industries.

Supporting our workforce

9. Besides MigrantWell Singapore, SBF Foundation has established other platforms to help uplift members of our workforce and community facing temporary or employment setbacks. We initiated the industry-led Compassion Fund, where businesses within the same industry pool resources and collectively care for their affected employees. The Employability Fund is another that develops programmes to help vulnerable individuals within our community join or re-enter the workforce.
10. We look forward to more initiatives ahead as we work with our members to pursue causes which are close to their hearts – be it in the social, arts, education, health, environment and so on.

Conclusion

11. On behalf of SBF Foundation, I would like to thank our partners, the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat, the Estate of Ng Teng Fong, the Ministry of Manpower, and St Andrew's Mission Hospital, for bringing this project, MigrantWell Singapore, this far. It is an excellent example of the fruitful collaboration of supportive Government, generous donors, responsible business and effective social agencies.
12. I trust it has been a heart-warming experience for all who have been involved. We grow as a people when we do extend compassion and care for one another wherever we come from, be it near or far, high or low. Together with SBF, the SBF Foundation will continue to foster the business community to care for our employees and the community.
13. Thank you.