

**REMARKS BY MR HSIEH FU HUA
CHAIRMAN, SBF Foundation
18 June 2019, 12.30PM
ASME-SBF FOUNDATION COMPASSION FUND
FOR
MIGRANT WORKERS' ASSISTANCE FUND CLOSING EVENT**

A very good afternoon to:

1. **Mr Zagy Mohamad**, Minister of State, Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Manpower
2. **Mr Kurt Wee**, President, Association of Small & Medium Enterprises
3. **Mr Yeo Guat Kwang**, Chairman, Migrant Workers' Centre
4. Distinguished Business Leaders, Donors, Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION

1. Our businesses big and small have been generous to support our community at large. I witnessed this from my years serving in the social service sector. Today, we are commemorating another equally important social initiative of the SBF members to support and care collectively for vulnerable members of our workforce. In short, this is about **caring within** and follows from the common saying, Charity begins at home.

2. Notwithstanding the current difficult business challenges faced by our members, I am so encouraged that all of you have readily come onboard towards this common goal.

3. I thank and congratulate Mr Kurt Wee, President of ASME for your leadership in encouraging your members and partners to pool funds for our workers, particularly the migrant workers in this instance. I much prefer to address them as guest workers or Ke Gong the term used in mandarin. In the early years of Singapore, they were called coolies, or Ku Li in mandarin which means "Bitter Labour". My grandfather, was a coolie too when he landed here to work in early 1900 with his brother, both only in their teens. With my migrant worker heritage, I am personally grateful that we are giving full appreciation today to the place and contribution of migrant workers in our society.

4. I wish also to express our heartfelt appreciation to ASME's members for your donation towards this initiative and your quick and willing response is commendable.

COLLECTIVE EFFORT

5. Alongside the ASME donation, SBF foundation has made a matching \$200k donation which comes from the Compassion fund that we launched. The SBF Foundation fund forms the framework for SBF to galvanise the business community to support employees in need. This will complement existing schemes by the Government and other community groups.

7. For this effort, The Foundation has set up a fund of up to \$2m drawing from its own funds as well as from other like-minded donors. With this amount we intend to match contributions to encourage others like ASME to set up their respective industry-led Compassion Fund.

8. I am happy to share with you that 5 other Associations have confirmed their participation. They are Singapore Contractors Association (SCAL), Singapore Security Associations (SAS), Association of Certified Security Agencies (ACSA), Singapore Furniture Associations (SFA) and The Law Society. We believe more will come forward.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

9. Besides kick starting the industry-led Compassion Fund, the SBF Foundation is looking to better support another segment of the workforce - our elder workforce through initiatives to enhance their capabilities. In addition, other vulnerable groups in our society will be engaged to provide them better access and support as they enter or re-enter our workforce. Indeed, these initiatives are most timely as they resonate with SM Tharman's call to all of us to strengthen our social compact.



10. In closing, let me thank you all on behalf of SBF Foundation for all your contributions and we will work with you and many others to continue to such efforts to preserve the solidarity of our workforce, our community and nation.