

## **WELCOME ADDRESS BY MRS THERESA FOO**

Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister for National Development,

Mr Teo Siong Seng, Chairman of SBF,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening.

1 Welcome to SBF Foundation's Inaugural Fundraising Dinner at Gardens by the Bay.

2 We have been looking forward to this gathering of friends from the business community to recognise your contributions to the SBF Foundation since our inception in November 2013.

### **SBF FOUNDATION'S VISION AND MISSION**

3 The SBF Foundation is a collective foundation of the business community, serving the needs of the local community. Our vision is that of a compassionate and pro-active business community, playing its part to build an inclusive Singapore. And our mission is to encourage, enable and enhance the contributions of the business community to the social, vocational and educational upliftment of all in Singapore.

4 Last year in 2014, we supported two programmes to advance the education and employability of vulnerable and needy youths. First, in partnership with the Institute of Technical Education, we supported the ITE Overseas Industrial Attachment Programme to support ITE students with financial needs. This is a six month industrial attachment programme, infused with six to eight weeks of overseas attachment. The Foundation will fund their airfare, accommodation and meals overseas and engage the business community to provide overseas industrial attachment opportunities, mentorship and guidance. Our funding will go towards supporting 12 students, who were placed with 4 companies from July this year. We thank companies

like HYFLEX Precision Sdn Bhd and Nuvoton Technology Corporation for their participation. Second programme is in partnership with EQUAL-ARK where we supported youth with special needs to develop soft skills for success in school and beyond. The innovative programme consisting of horse riding lessons by Equestrian Association of Singapore reaches out to over 200 students per year. At least 70% of the students achieved an improvement in their social, emotional and behavioural skills as a result of the programme.

5 This year in 2015, our Foundation achieved significant milestones and partnerships. We set up our first scholarship with the Singapore University of Technology and Design (or SUTD in short), as well as our first collaboration to support disadvantaged workers on Project IN by SG Enable. The funds raised this evening will go towards supporting these two new initiatives. Let me tell you more about these two initiatives.

### **SBF FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP AT SUTD**

6 One of the Foundation's objectives is to encourage the education and enhance the employability of youths, particularly those from financially disadvantaged families through collaboration with the business community. The SBF Foundation Scholarship at SUTD aims to level the playing field and provide equal opportunities to all students regardless of their family financial circumstances. This ensures that a quality education remains accessible to all Singaporeans, including those from humble family backgrounds. Our contribution of 12 undergraduate scholarships at SUTD will cover tuition fees and a small allowance to recipients over their four-year tertiary education.

7 As part of the programme, our scholars will be offered internship opportunities with SBF member companies and access to SBF's roundtables, forums and networking events. This exposure will give them the added perspective essential for developing valuable leadership skills. The main key for this programme is to groom high-calibre candidates, a valuable human capital in Singapore's technology and engineering sectors. Our partnership

with SUTD is very much aligned to Singapore's SMART Nation agenda of harnessing ICT, networks and data to support better living, create opportunities and focus on the educational fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, or STEM.

8 As a start, we have selected three scholars. I've met with them recently and I'm delighted to have them join us tonight. They are bright and enthusiastic young adults with dreams and potentials beyond their years. We have invited one of them to share her experience with you later.

### **SG ENABLE - PROJECT IN**

9 Another of our objectives is to promote the welfare of disadvantaged and needy employees, leveraging on the business community to contribute back to society. In this regard, we are happy to partner SG Enable on Project IN, a two-year pilot programme to support young adults with intellectual disabilities and autism at the workplace via internships and on-the-job learning. Through Project IN, employers can also build their capabilities and know-how on hiring and working with persons with disabilities. This is important as companies can tap on the diverse strengths and abilities that these employees can offer. This will help us in our efforts to build an inclusive society and help to address the business community's need for manpower. Under this partnership in the first year, we have selected 19 young adults placed on internships with three employers, namely Han's F&B, National University Hospital and Sentosa Development Corporation. Again I would like to thank these companies for their participation.

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH NVPC**

10 I'm also pleased to announce that the Foundation will be partnering with the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) on a series of programmes that seek to support companies and corporate leaders in their Corporate Giving journey. The Singapore Roadmap for Corporate Giving

provides a framework to guide our corporate giving efforts and will be used to facilitate companies in understanding their giving profile and tap useful resources to build capacity, capability, knowledge and network.

### **ENGAGING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

11 The business community has shown its strong support to our Foundation and we would like to acknowledge our Founding Donors whose generosity has given us a firm head-start. Special mention to our Principal Founding Donor, Mr Philip Ng of Far East Organization, for gifting SBF and SBF Foundation a home at the new SBF Center. The generous gifting of 22,000 square feet at SBF Center is expected to be completed in the first half of 2017. In addition, Philip has also pledged a cash donation of \$10 million to seed the SBF Foundation.

12 A big thank you to Philip, Far East Organization, Toteboard and all of you present here for your generous support and donation to the Foundation. With your support, I am sure that we will go far in making a difference to our community. Together, let us build an inclusive Singapore that we can all be proud of.

### **CONCLUSION**

13 In closing, I would like to thank Minister Lawrence Wong and all our distinguished guests for your presence tonight. A big “thank you” goes to the companies and organisations that have supported and participated in our programmes. Special thanks to the members of the organizing committee and management, volunteers and emcee for this evening, Ms Susan Ng, for their contributions which have made this event a success.

14 I’m very happy to announce that we have raised more than S\$1million for this evening’s event. Thank you once again for your generosity.

15 I hope you will enjoy the food and the entertainment that we have put together for you this evening. Thank you.