

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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30 SEP 1978

MC/SEP/35/78 (Social Affairs)

Acc. No.	NARC	
78	0060	42

SPEECH BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, AG MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
AT THE SINGAPORE SOGETSU ASSOCIATION ANNUAL EXHIBITION ON  
TUESDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER 1978 AT 1730 HOURS AT THE  
ISLAND BALLROOM OF THE SHANGRI-LA HOTEL

For a number of years, the Singapore Sogetsu Association has been having its annual flower show. Besides rallying the membership towards this interesting event and to publicise the activities of the Association, the annual flower show has been combined with the noble objective of raising funds for charitable causes. This year, the funds raised will go to two worthy causes, namely, the St Andrew's Mission Hospital and the Rochore Kongsu for the Aged. Charitable organisations such as these will always welcome donations which are raised on their behalf. Many of these charitable organisations will not be able to carry on without three vital areas of support. One is in the donations which they receive to keep them going. The second is a constant supply of dedicated volunteers both in the Board of Management as well as at service level. And the third factor would be the dedication of the staff employed by the respective organisations.

Fund raising by service clubs as well as donations from individuals and organisations should not let up. The problem would be to identify which are the charitable organisations which would be most in need of funds from time to time. Some charitable organisations are more successful than others in raising funds and have better organisations to ensure a regular supply of funds. However, there are other charitable organisations which are not so glamorous in the public eye or do not have the expertise or the management to organise attractive fund raising projects. These are the organisations which need greater support. If there are donors and organisations which intend to donate or raise funds for charity and are not sure of the worthwhile causes to help out, they can always consult my Ministry and we will be most willing to direct their efforts accordingly.

The other area of need as far as the voluntary sector is concerned is in the area of direct services from volunteers. There are limitations in the use of volunteers for welfare work. Volunteers can only spare a limited part of their time. Those who have special abilities or skills unfortunately are the busiest. For example, voluntary institutions need teachers and instructors of music, handicraft, vocational skills and the like and volunteers in those categories are in short supply. The voluntary institutions require volunteers to be available during the day and not only on week-ends and in the evenings. Perhaps organisations such as the Singapore Sogetsu Association which is made up of housewives and ladies who will have the time to spare, besides flower arrangement, can volunteer themselves for welfare work. There are many areas in which they can be of assistance and which will suit their particular interest.

Voluntary organisations, whether institutional or otherwise, also require dedicated staff who will not only view their work as merely another job. They must have a special conviction and dedication to the kind of work that they are doing. In the final outcome, the reassuring thought would be that those rewarded by their hard work and dedication would be those who are really in need. There should be job satisfaction in knowing that one has contributed more to society than in other kinds of work.

So in this beautiful setting of flowers, we can always be reminded that there is a beautiful world outside. It is what we make of it and how we can help others to make the best of it. It will be good if we can spare a thought for others from time to time especially when we can afford to participate in meaningful hobbies like flower arrangement.

It gives me great pleasure now to declare this exhibition open.

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