



MEDIA RELEASE

Contact:

Ms Selina Gan

Email: selina@scwo.org.sg

Tel: (O) 6571-0181

Maintenance Support Central Official Launch

Over a 10-year period approximately **70,000 children** over a 10-year period, are affected by divorce in Singapore. As the number of divorces rises, this number will also increase.

The cost to the State for one child in an institutional facility is **\$17,000 per annum**.

In March 2009, the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (SCWO), set up a Taskforce to research the issue of improving the payment of maintenance to families affected by divorce and separation, driven by a deep concern for the impact of non-payments on families, especially on the children. We also see an increase in the number of women, who end up homeless.

The findings and resulting recommendations have seen appropriate measures and amendments to the Women's Charter adopted in July 2011.

To complement the amendments to improve enforcement processes with practical support, we are now able to launch **the first one-stop drop-in centre – Maintenance Support Central**

The **Services** we will provide include:

- Legal Advice on Enforcement Options
- Information on Aid Schemes
- Financial & Family Counseling
- Credit Bureau Reporting
- Video-link Filing
- Support in locating employment, childcare and housing in cases of need
- Follow-up monitoring of children's educational and emotional progress

With the support of the Pro Bono Services Office of the Law Society of Singapore and the family bar, hardship cases which satisfy a means and merits test may also qualify for limited legal representation.

Timeline

- March 2009 SCWO Taskforce set up to examine the issue
Focus Group discussion with Stakeholders
- 27 July 2009 Held a Public Forum on Enforcement of Maintenance Order
- August 2010 1st Reading of Amendments to the Women's Charter Bill
- 20 August 2010 Proposal for Setting up of Maintenance Support Central given to MCYS
- January 2011 2nd Reading of Amendments to the Women's Charter Bill
- 24 May 2011 Funding Approval from NCSS
- 1 June 2011 Women's Charter Amendment Bill (2010) comes into effect
- July 2011 Renovations to set up Maintenance Support Central at SCWO premises
- September 2011 Maintenance Support Central starts its operations

Members of the media are cordially invited to attend the Official Launch

on 27 September 2011 at 11 am at the

SCWO Centre, 96 Waterloo Street, Singapore 187967

Guest of Honour:

Mdm Halimah Yacob, Minister of State,

Ministry of Community Development Youth and Sports

For Media Enquiries and to RSVP, please email Selina at selina@scwo.org.sg or call 6837-0181

About SCWO

The Singapore Council of Women's Organisations is the National Coordinating body of women's organisations in Singapore. Incorporated in March 1980, the SCWO serves to unite the various women's organisations, clubs, committees, groups and women leaders together, working in accordance with its various aims and objectives. The SCWO also serves to coordinate these associations into a national movement and to act on their behalf in matters for which it is authorised by its members.

The SCWO is represented on various Government and inter-ministry committees where we contribute our views in the areas of family, women, and on children's issues. We are involved in government Feedback Sessions and other discussions on issues and policies

Our Services & Initiatives

Star Shelter—A crisis centre that provides temporary refuge for women and children who are victims of family violence.

New2U Thrift Shop—sells pre-loved clothing, bric-a-brac and small furniture with proceeds going to Star Shelter.

Maintenance Support Central – A one-stop centre to assist claimants in the collection of maintenance payments from defaulters.

IT Hub—offers a non-threatening environment for women and their family members to become IT literate and for the re-training of retrenched workers.

Bonny Hicks Education & Training Centre—consists of five rooms for training courses and meetings, and are available for rent.

F.A. Chua Library— is an archival library of all women's organisations — local and international.

Women' Register— a platform for networking, education and mentorship for women between 18 to 35 years of age.

BoardAgender – assists and facilitates the appointment of women to leadership positions in the public, private and non-profit sector.

Wall of Fame – dedicated to the women who made a difference in Singapore.

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15 September 2011