Welcome Address at Official Launch of Centre for Social Entrepreneurship & Philanthropy by Professor Bernard Yeung, Dean, NUS Business School:

Friday, August 28 2009 at 2 pm, Auditorium, Shaw Foundation Alumni House

Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, President, National University of Singapore;
Mr Keith Chua, Co-Trustee, Mrs Lee Choon Guan Trust Fund;
Ms Chew Gek Khim, Deputy Chairman, Tan Chin Tuan Foundation;
Distinguished guests
Colleagues
Ladies and gentlemen
A very good afternoon.

Welcome to the official launch of the NUS Business School’s Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy, also known as CSEP (pronounced as ‘C’, ‘S’, ‘E’, ‘P’). The
establishment of the Centre represents NUS Business School’s commitment to mobilising its various stakeholders to address local and global social challenges and problems. The Centre aims to advance research and education, as well as direct engagements in the areas of social entrepreneurship and philanthropy by students, alumni and staff.

CSEP was established at the right time. In the face of globalisation, the world is particularly challenged with income disparity, poverty, food and water shortages, lack of access to healthcare and sanitation, marginalization of communities among many others. Many of these problems have been further exacerbated by the economic downturn, economic distress takes its toll.

NUS Business School wants, and needs, to be a part of these efforts to address social problems. We want to exercise social responsibility and contribute back to the larger community. As an educational institution, our initiatives of this kind raise
awareness among our students and help build their commitment to the human race.

Although the Centre for Social Entrepreneurship & Philanthropy has only been operational for a year, I am heartened that it has generated considerable interest in the non-profit and social enterprise sectors among our students. Currently, about eighty students are engaged in consulting practicum projects with social enterprises, co-operative societies and charitable organisations. Overseas community development trips are also in the pipeline.

These projects provide students with opportunities to put into practice the theories they have learned in class. In addition, they enable students to better understand the challenges faced by the less privileged like people with disabilities or mental health conditions.
CSEP and the NUS Volunteer Network recently did an undergraduate survey. They found that 3 in 10 undergraduates currently volunteer their time and effort, while 7 in 10 undergraduates have undertaken some form of voluntary work in the recent past.

The story:
Our youths want to make a positive impact within our society. They need us to facilitate.

So, Mr Keith Chua, thank you for your generous gift of $1.5 million in support of the Centre. This gift will enable us to engage more students in community development efforts, as well as build up the body of knowledge in the fields of social entrepreneurship and philanthropy. You are our partner in
education and I look forward to working together with you in shaping the future.

Thank you and have a pleasant afternoon.