

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE FROM CASE AND STB

Collaboration between CASE & STB sends a stronger signal to recalcitrant retailers to curb unfair trade practices

Singapore, 15 March 2011 - The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) and the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) has signed an agreement on 15 March 2011 to appoint CASE to co-administer consumer-related complaints by tourists. The agreement is effective 1 July 2011.

Currently, tourist-related complaints are handled by the STB while CASE handles cases received from local consumers. The signing of the agreement will see CASE partnering STB to take on tourists complaints in relation to the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA). CASE will also provide mediation on behalf of tourists and represent them at the Small Claims Tribunal for redress. Tourists will still be able to provide feedback via the existing STB channels (hotline, website, email).

Ms Neeta Lachmandas, STB's Executive Director, Capability & Innovation and Visitor Information & Feedback Division, explained, "CASE is a dedicated consumer association with the professional expertise and legal resources to administer consumer complaints. As such, STB believes that the interests of tourists would be better served with the appointment of CASE as co-administrator. STB will also continue to work closely with CASE on broader matters relating to consumer-related complaints. For the first time, STB & CASE will be sharing a common database to handle all tourist-related complaints effectively and efficiently. We believe this partnership with CASE sends a stronger signal to recalcitrant retailers to curb unfair trade practices."

"This is a natural progression of CASE's continued contribution to Singapore. CASE and STB share common interests, and by working together to help foreign tourists, we will make a positive impact to the consumer movement in Singapore and boost Singapore's international standing. The collaboration will bring about greater efficiencies and effectiveness in handling the consumer complaints, and ultimately lead to win-win outcomes for the consumers, STB and CASE", added Mr Yeo Guat Kwang, CASE President.

The STB has been mediating on behalf of tourists since 2003. In 2010, STB received 1,557 complaints and out of 5,726 complaints received in between 2007 and 2010, 37% were on consumer electronic complaints. The increasing attention on this sector and their dubious practices as reported widely by the media has affected the reputation of Singapore as a premium tourist destination.

With CASE on board to co-manage consumer-related complaints together with STB, visitors from China, India, Macao and Malaysia can be assured of a continual platform for recourse even after they depart Singapore. This is because CASE has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with these countries, giving consumers better protection for their purchases in the countries.

Moving forward, CASE and STB are positive that the collaboration will increase consumer protection and awareness and enhance visitor confidence whilst shopping in Singapore.