

WELCOME REMARKS BY SINGAPORE RED CROSS CHAIRMAN
MR TAN KAI HOE, AT SINGAPORE RED CROSS 75th ANNIVERSARY LAUNCH
& AWARDS CEREMONY AT HOMETEAMNS BEDOK ON 2 SEPTEMBER 2024

President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Patron of the Singapore Red Cross

Our dear Volunteers, Donors, Partners, Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Firstly, good afternoon to all of you.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to our Awards Ceremony. Today, we also celebrate a significant milestone in the history of the Singapore Red Cross – our 75th Anniversary. The 75th Anniversary is not just an opportunity for us to celebrate - it is also a chance for us to look back and reflect on our work and its impact on the community, and then to rededicate ourselves to our humanitarian mission, and reinvigorate ourselves to do more and to do better.

Unleashing the Power of Humanity

As we look back on our journey, I would firstly like to thank the remarkable individuals and organisations who have journeyed with us. We truly appreciate your contributions and sacrifices to further the mission of the Singapore Red Cross. Today, we will recognise 223 individuals, including youth leaders and veteran volunteers, as well as 57 organisations, whose unwavering support has positively impacted the lives of many.

This milestone year, we have introduced a special award, the Singapore Red Cross 75th Anniversary 'Together for Humanity' Award, to honour volunteers and community partners whose consistent and persistent work has played a vital role in advancing SRC's humanitarian work over the past decades.

Esteemed leaders of the Red Cross Movement, Mrs Genevieve Peggy Jeffs, Ms Terene Seow and Mr Jeffrey Chan shared one thing in common. For decades, they have been passionate and selfless in giving of their time, their knowledge, their personal networks and their love in canvassing for funds and resources and in representing SRC internationally, to support our humanitarian causes and help solidify the standing of Singapore Red Cross in the community. With them, 14 organisations including government agencies and corporate organisations, will receive the 'Together for Humanity' Award, for their enduring partnership, redirecting their deep-seated passion to make a tangible difference in the lives of those in need.

Please join me in congratulating them. *[applause]*

We are unfortunately not living in a benign or safe world - just turn on the news and one will be bombarded with reports on the various wars, civil unrests, conflicts and natural disasters occurring around the world. However, it is also in such a difficult environment that the mission of the Red Cross is all the more pertinent and valuable. As we mark our 75th anniversary in peaceful Singapore, it is my hope that we will take action, starting with our own little island, to envision new opportunities and greater possibilities for a kinder, and more humanitarian future. Hence our tagline - Coast to Coast, Heart to Heart. Let's build a world where every act of kindness, no matter how small, multiplies to touch many lives. Let's build empowered communities, strengthened by care and compassion, and united by a shared commitment to humanity. Let's build a future, where our efforts to build capacity

and enhance resilience, manifest in impactful actions, like these examples by the many selfless volunteers present today:

- After learning first aid at the Singapore Red Cross Academy, Ms Han Bi Guang responded to an emergency alert on *MyResponder*, an app by SCDF to alert members of the public to nearby medical cases. She performed CPR on a cardiac arrest victim and saved his life. In recognition of her courage and public spiritedness, Ms Han will receive the Lifesaver Award today. She is joined by Lifesavers Ms Johanna Mendoza, Liew Tze Yeow, and Mohamed Noor Ilhan Bin Mohamed Salim who will also receive the Award.
- Also, four years ago, Nurin Akisha Kamarnor was facing challenges whilst preparing for her PSLE. With encouragement and weekly tuition aid from the Singapore Red Cross volunteers, Nurin scored well enough to advance to Secondary School. Today, Nurin is part of her school's student council, and leads her school's audio-visual team, and is a big sister to eight siblings, for whom she makes breakfast every day. Fuelled by her desire to pay it forward, Nurin is now volunteering with the Young Hearts programme to help students in their studies. Her journey is inspiring, and exemplifies the lasting impact of our humanitarian efforts.

Our Future, Re-Imagined

As we write the next chapter of our story, we invite you to join us on this journey of hope. Join us to build resilient and empowered communities, and play a role in responding to emerging challenges. With shrinking family size and the fast-ageing population, we have to work together to secure our future blood supply and first response. Join our YouthInspire blood donor club, or Adopt a Blood Bank near your office. Be trained and be ready, be our Responder for Resilience. We count on each one of

our community befrienders, medical chaperones, blood donors, first aiders, youth workers, trainers and volunteers to keep Singapore strong and resilient.

Looking ahead, we will progressively increase the scale and scope of our humanitarian services. In addition to our First Aid coverage at national and community events, we are working closely with NParks to expand our First Aiders on Wheels programme to more parks. You will see our volunteers at East Coast Park, Punggol Promenade, Pulau Ubin and Jurong Lake Gardens on weekends and public holidays.

We are also committed to supporting the oft-overlooked migrant worker community in Singapore, helping them feel “Home Away from Home” through activities and training that enhance their physical and mental well-being while in Singapore, as well as our last-mile assistance for the unfortunate ones who need medical conveyance back to their home in challenging times.

Our path forward also includes embracing innovative technologies to enhance training and improve disaster response. Red Cross Youth’s new curriculum now includes service learning, mental wellness, social entrepreneurship and new technology, such as Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and drone operations, to prepare youths to participate in humanitarian operations in the future. Our staff are also learning to leverage AI tools to enhance productivity.

We want to position ourselves as a forward-thinking, forward-looking organisation, and we are constantly improving our programmes and upgrading our solutions to better protect and serve the vulnerable. We are exploring enhanced features for HoME+, our Home Monitoring & Eldercare programme, to ensure the safety and well-being of our seniors. At the Red Cross Home for the

Disabled, we are harnessing the power of technology to redefine our engagement with persons with disabilities. We have adopted innovative solutions including robotic assistance and interactive projection systems for mental stimulation, ensuring better quality of care.

And we look to connect our Red Cross Juniors with our elderly beneficiaries, to promote intergenerational bonding. Soon we will launch the Red Cross Golden Club, to rally more seniors to volunteer with us.

Over the years, we have pioneered and championed important initiatives to build social and community resilience. It is only because of the collective efforts of our steadfast employees, volunteers, donors, and partners that we were able to maximise our resources and impact the most vulnerable amongst us. We endeavour to serve even more communities, particularly the elderly who live alone; persons with disabilities; disadvantaged families; children and youth from rental homes; and migrant workers.

Spirit of Global Solidarity

The spirit of global solidarity - to stand together for humanity - is an important value that Singapore holds dear. Beyond responding to disasters overseas, the SRC is also focused on building long-term capacity and resilience in communities. Through these initiatives, we support our sister national societies in areas such as Pandemic Preparedness, Resource Mobilisation, and Organisational Development. We are set to launch the Better Together Solidarity Fund for Southeast Asia national societies, to accelerate collaborative capacity-building initiatives. We continue to facilitate training in the areas of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), mental health and psychosocial support, disaster mapping with drones, and more. These are crucial in fostering resilience and ensuring that communities are better equipped to face future challenges.

It is in this spirit that we are recognising the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Red Cross Society of China, the Egyptian Red Crescent and the Thai Red Cross, for their active cooperation, enabling us to transcend different boundaries to help one another in times of need.

Reaching Out, Winning Hearts

Later today, Mr President will launch our 75th Anniversary Community Outreach - a vibrant and interactive showcase that celebrates our collective impact and offers a glimpse into our future initiatives. Our partners HometeamNS Bedok, Tampines West CC, Suntec City, United Square, Capitol Piazza, and IMM Mall are kindly hosting these pop-ups for the community to discover our vision and our work. We encourage you to bring your family, friends and colleagues to experience the humanitarian journey with us.

We thank you for your enduring support to the Singapore Red Cross, and to our lifesaving mission. We also hope that by coming together, we can inspire each other to make a bigger difference together.

Thank you.