

**WELCOME REMARKS BY MR BENJAMIN WILLIAM, SINGAPORE RED CROSS
SECRETARY GENERAL/CEO, AT THE SINGAPORE RED CROSS HUMANITARIAN
LECTURE ON 7 DECEMBER 2018 AT YWCA FORT CANNING LODGE AT 7.30PM**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my pleasure to welcome you to The Singapore Red Cross Humanitarian Lecture. We are very honoured to have with us Chung To, Founder and Chairman of Chi Heng Foundation. We are delighted that so many of you are here on a Friday evening to listen to his remarkable story, and to engage with our work.

The Singapore Red Cross launched the Humanitarian Lecture Series in 2014, to galvanise interest in and support for humanitarian issues and activities both locally and abroad. We seek to bring to the fore matters of concern in the humanitarian world and to present different perspectives to the complex issues and situations confronting the world. In so doing we hope to broaden horizons, lend a voice to those in the field tackling the volatile environment, and inspire others to join in the humanitarian journey. Over the years, we have presented four lectures spanning diverse humanitarian themes, such as humanitarian diplomacy, disability and disaster rebuilding, by esteemed speakers in and out of the Red Cross Movement.

For this evening's event, I wish to thank our co-organisers Social Collider.co and our partners Chi Heng Foundation, community exhibitors, including Quest Ventures & Fairmarch for working with us to present this lecture.

Before we proceed with the lecture, I wish to share with you the work that SRC has been doing in China. The Singapore Red Cross has established long-standing relationships with our partners in China, both within and outside of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. In particular, we have worked closely with our partners following major disasters, both in the relief phase as well as, the recovery and rehabilitation phases.

For example, following the Sichuan Earthquake in 2008, we supported numerous recovery projects with our partners in Sichuan Province. These recovery projects include the rebuilding of infrastructure that was severely damaged by the earthquake, provision of medical

equipment to hospitals and village health clinics, water and sanitation projects in schools and remote villages, and programmes to enhance the resilience of communities.

To highlight a few specific examples of our projects, we funded the rebuilding of a home for the disabled and destitute in Peng Zhou. Subsequently we have sent our youth volunteers to help out in the home as part of our Overseas Humanitarian Project. We also funded the reconstruction of schools that were categorised by the authorities as “dangerous” in several counties in Sichuan and provided the Jiuzhaigou County Chinese Tibetan Hospital with medical equipment like Glucose Monitoring System and Digital Fundus Camera. Apart from the Sichuan Earthquake, the Singapore Red Cross has also responded likewise following the Yunnan Earthquake in 2012, Sichuan Earthquake in 2013 and Ludian Earthquake in 2014.

It was in the course of our extensive work in China, and collaboration with our partners in China, that I first came to hear about Chung To and his extraordinary accomplishments. When I heard from my good friend, Wee Teck, that he was coming to Singapore, I made sure to put in a special request for him to share with us his thoughts. It was too good an opportunity to pass up.

So this evening, Chung To, will share with us his life mission of over two decades, of fighting discrimination and helping the victims of HIV/AIDS and their families. For those who don't already know, Chung To was an investment banker who left the comfort and benefits of the industry to become a full-time humanitarian. He now runs his own nonprofit organisation, the Chi Heng Foundation, which today sponsors 9,000 children in education and care, and cumulatively, more than 20,000 children across 12 provinces in China. The foundation is now deemed as a best practice model of its kind. I am sure there is a lot we can all learn about.

And tonight, he will share with us his insights, as well as the innovative and pragmatic and approaches that he applied in developing a systematic and sustainable humanitarian programme, which is now known as the largest non-governmental effort aimed at helping children impacted by AIDS in China. I hope that Chung To and his story of sheer grit will inspire you, just as he'd inspired me. I wish you a fruitful time. Thank you.