

**SPEECH BY MR BENJAMIN WILLIAM, SINGAPORE RED CROSS  
SECRETARY GENERAL/CEO, AT THE SINGAPORE NURSES  
ASSOCIATION - SINGAPORE RED CROSS MOU SIGNING  
AT SNA HOUSE ON 12 AUGUST 2017**

Mrs Mary Tan, Patron of the Singapore Nurses Association

A/Prof Lim Swee Hia, President of Singapore Nurses Association

Friends from the Nursing Fraternity

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning. I wish to congratulate the Singapore Nurses Association on the occasion of its 60th Anniversary, and for the Opening of this refurbished SNA Training Centre. This is wonderful gathering, and the MOU we are about to sign, between SNA and SRC, is a great milestone for our two organisations, both with a very rich heritage.

Over the past 68 years, the Singapore Red Cross has been serving humanity and saving lives locally and abroad. Over the past 60 years, SNA has been committed to supporting the professional development of nurses, whose mission is also to save lives. Today, we celebrate this strategic partnership between our organisations, for *three* potential landmark developments.

*Firstly*, for the potential it brings for Singapore's nursing expertise to be embedded in the humanitarian services that the Red Cross delivers, round-the-clock and round-the-world. With the all-important work that you do - promoting and maintaining health, preventing diseases and caring for the sick - nursing forms an important part of the healthcare equation. Besides facilitating nursing students' access to humanitarian missions, our collaboration will also give them the opportunity to conduct in-country workshops to train and build the capacity of nurses in the region.

Ms Nadiah Erniyanti Maliki is a fine example of a nurse who has been volunteering with the us since 2015. She was the first nurse mobilised from the Singapore Red Cross Nurses' Network, to help in the relief efforts following the Nepal earthquake in May 2015. Last December, she led the Nurses Network in an Overseas Humanitarian Programme in Kupang, Indonesia to provide health assessment and education. Today, she is a key member of Red Cross ElderAid workgroup. She actively participates in outreach efforts in the community, as well as mentoring and training other volunteers for healthcare related missions.

The humanitarian challenges facing the region are immense. So much needs to be done. With more nurses being mobilised and empowered to be actively involved in community services, many more lives would be touched, improved and even saved.

In Singapore, our collaboration with SNA is an extension of our Community-Led Action for Resilience vision. CLARE envisions mobilising skilled resources towards an optimal community-based support framework that delivers sustained care to address the needs of the vulnerable within that community.

Our collaboration will include community outreach and advocacy; as well as health promotion and caring for the elderly and vulnerable persons. This will be delivered through the essential services that Red Cross provides in Singapore - such as ElderAid, HoME+ (which stands for Home Monitoring & Eldercare) and Clinic-on-Wheels (to be launched end-year). Our nurse-volunteers can expect to reach out to and directly touch the lives of some 500 persons this year.

This *second* development is a significant one. Jointly, our nurse-volunteers have the power to improve the accessibility to health services, increase health literacy and enhance the quality of life of the marginalised, including the elderly, migrant workers and caregivers. They can promote healthy community ageing-in-place, and enhance the nation's resilience in the face of our ageing population. This is a lifesaving partnership, where the impact is manifold.

*Thirdly*, we will work together to ignite in the next generation - the Red Cross Youth members - an interest in the nursing profession. This has the potential to help us secure the efficacy of our future healthcare environment. The Red Cross Youth Movement in schools is more than 4,000 strong. Its robust curriculum has inspired many of our youth to proceed on a nursing career and become fine nurses and paramedics over the years. One example is Mr Alvin Ee, a senior staff nurse and a Red Cross Youth leader. On his off days, Alvin teaches first aid at the Red Cross Academy and continues to mentor young cadets. I am confident more will follow in his footsteps.

But of course, nurses have worked in partnership with SRC for many years. Even as we look to the future, we remember the times we shared. My team has produced an exhibition on the contributions that nurses have made in our humanitarian work over the many years. These include peacetime missions to Myanmar, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, as well as disaster response to Nepal and Myanmar. Locally, our nursing volunteers lead community health screening, wellness talks, first aid coverage, and more recently, they are playing an instrumental role in setting up of the Clinic-on-Wheels.

We've have had a mutually beneficial cooperation over the years. The MOU we sign today consolidates our close working relationship, provides a new institutional framework and paves the way for us to tap on the synergies that exist, as we look to the future. We look forward to an enriching and enduring partnership for humanity - for many more years to come.

Thank you.