

**SPEECH BY MR BENJAMIN WILLIAM, SECRETARY GENERAL & CEO,
SINGAPORE RED CROSS
SRC-SP MOU SIGNING CEREMONY AT SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC,
ON 19 OCTOBER 2017 at 6.30PM**

Mr Soh Wai Wah, Principal / CEO of Singapore Polytechnic

Singapore Polytechnic's School of Architecture & The Built Environment

Lecturers, Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am glad to be here today to formalise the partnership between Singapore Red Cross and Singapore Polytechnic School of Architecture & The Built Environment.

For SRC, the MOU marks a significant milestone in our efforts to raise awareness of humanitarian issues and challenges, especially amongst the youth. The Diploma-Plus Certificate Programme in Humanitarian Affairs officially commences today, and I am heartened to learn that the course has attracted the interest of more than 120 students. This is significant. No other institute in Southeast Asia offers such a holistic public programme in humanitarian studies for tertiary students.

Over the last few months, we have been working closely with lecturers at the School of Architecture & The Built Environment. By tapping on their knowledge and technical expertise, we have been able to co-develop a holistic curriculum that covers a spectrum of humanitarian work, from disaster management to humanitarian financing.

Through our overseas community development projects, SRC has come to realise that young people possess the exceptional potential to change mindsets and break down barriers. Those who have been involved in community service at home also tend to grow into the role of a global humanitarian more easily. Besides contributing to the

humanitarian cause, our youth hold immense potential to become great ambassadors for the country.

We are appreciative of this opportunity to collaborate with a reputable Institute of Higher Learning like Singapore Polytechnic. Through this partnership, we aim to reach out to a bigger community of socially-conscious young people, and in turn hopefully inspire another generation of humanitarians.

The humanitarian landscape is fast changing. We are faced with ever-increasing, more severe, and more complex disasters. Often the impact of natural disasters is exacerbated by man-made crisis. It is important that our youth understand these challenges and the work of Red Cross and other humanitarian agencies in such circumstance. Having a deeper knowledge of humanitarian work and its intricacies, our youth can gain a better understanding of the factors that influence the progress and development of vulnerable communities and countries. Hopefully it will also cause them to be more socially conscious, and sensitive of the environment.

The Diploma-Plus Certificate Programme in Humanitarian Affairs can also provide a platform and a foundation for greater in-depth training and more advanced humanitarian courses. We hope that the course will encourage students to consider yet another career option within the humanitarian field. Going forward, our goal is to eventually roll out CET programmes in humanitarian affairs with Singapore Polytechnic, and reach out to a larger pool of adult learners.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Singapore Polytechnic for embarking on this collaboration with us. I look forward to exploring the further opportunities that this new relationship offers as our partnership develops.

Thank you.