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SPEECH BY MS SIM ANN, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION & MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, AT THE RED CROSS YOUTH 60TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER ON FRIDAY, 25 JANUARY 2013

Mr Tee Tua Ba
Chairman of the Singapore Red Cross

Mr Benjamin William
Secretary General of the Singapore Red Cross

Mr Ling Khoon Chow
Director Red Cross Youth

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

Good evening. I am pleased to join you this evening as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Singapore Red Cross Youth.

2 The World Red Cross Movement is the largest international humanitarian organisation providing assistance to the world's most vulnerable regardless of race, religion or beliefs. The Singapore Red Cross Youth, together with the Singapore Red Cross Society, is part of this noble international movement that is guided by the mission to build a better world through promoting peace, tolerance and respect for others. Let me congratulate the Singapore Red Cross Youth for your past 60 years of achievement and accomplishment in service to humanity.

3 The uniformed youth organisations is an integral part of the co-curricular activities in our schools and serve as a powerful platform to support the holistic

development of our students. I am glad that the Singapore Red Cross Youth, through its dedication to the mission of protecting human life and dignity, relieving human suffering and responding to emergencies, continue to provide an enriching and fulfilling learning experience for our students in schools. As cadets engage in the wide array of activities offered by the Red Cross Youth, not only are their personal effectiveness enhanced, their character are also shaped as lifelong values are ingrained in them.

4 I commend the Singapore Red Cross Youth for staying true to your mission while constantly renewing yourself and maintaining relevance in your programmes and approaches to develop our youth. Last year, I attended the Inter-School Debate Series on International Humanitarian Law co-organised by the Singapore Red Cross and learnt that “Exploring Humanitarian Law” was being incorporated into the programme for Red Cross Youth cadets in secondary schools. This year, RCY continues to review its curriculum with a focus on inculcating the values of service and volunteerism and empowering youths to reach out to the community.

5 As part of the core curriculum, cadets now learn about blood donation and donor recruitment, and have put into action the knowledge and values learnt. A group of youth led a blood donation awareness campaign and managed to obtain more than 480 potential blood donor contacts. I am sure they must have needed a lot of confidence to share with members of the public and perseverance to continue despite facing numerous rejections.

6 To further empower the youth, RCY has started a train-the-trainers programme so as to enable youth volunteers to serve effectively in the Red Cross school units. They will be equipped with the skills to guide the cadets in first-aid training and as ambassadors for blood donor recruitment.

7 Such initiatives provide powerful learning experiences for our students. Through engaging in such activities and providing opportunities for reflection, students learn to see themselves as a part of the larger community and how they can make a meaningful difference regardless of their youth.

8 I encourage the youth and cadets to continue the good work you have started and to continue to support the Singapore Red Cross' humanitarian cause. I believe giving back to society should be an important part of people's lives. I am heartened to hear that many adult volunteers of the Singapore Red Cross came through the ranks and continue to serve as leaders in the Red Cross Youth, sharing their valuable experience with students and young adults. I hope that many more of you here will do likewise.

9 I would also like to commend the efforts of the teachers and volunteers in the Red Cross Youth. Your contributions towards developing the potential and talent of our students exemplify the ethos of our education. I encourage you to continue in the good work in nurturing every Red Cross Youth member and inspiring these youths to become leaders in the society.

10 In closing, I wish you all a happy anniversary, and many more years of service to humanity. Thank you.