

**SPEECH BY DR MOHAMAD MALIKI BIN OSMAN, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS & MAYOR FOR SOUTHEAST
DISTRICT, AT RED CROSS YOUTH FIRST AID CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017
AT BEDOK TOWN SQUARE ON 4 MARCH 2017, 3.40PM**

SLTC (NS) Laurence Goh, Council Member, Singapore Red Cross

Mr Sahari Ani, Director, Red Cross Youth

Members of Red Cross Youth

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon. I am glad to join you today at the Red Cross Youth First Aid Championships.

Cultivating Young Lifesavers

I understand that this year's Championships has attracted over 1,230 young participants aged 10 to 35. Over the past six months, they have put in time and effort to hone their first aid skills to ready themselves for this competition. I am happy to hear that throughout the competition, these youths given their best - presenting their knowledge and competency in first aid interestingly and creatively.

But the impact of learning first aid goes beyond competitions. This competition has provided the platform for so many young persons in our community to acquire life-saving first aid skills. They will now be in a position to roll up their sleeves, provide first aid and save lives. Furthermore, over 6,000 Red Cross Youth will help pique the interest of their peers and family members in learning first aid. In turn, this brings us a step closer to the national goal of having one first aider in every home and helps build a more resilient society.

I am also heartened that today, the Singapore Red Cross has decided to go a step further. They will be presenting 82 schools with emergency preparedness boxes. These boxes contain first aid kits and a 'SOP' (Standard Operating Procedure) which will equip the school administration with useful step-by-step guides to deal with emergencies such as fires, and effectively conduct mass evacuations in the event of an emergency, like a terrorist attack.

First Aid and Emergency Preparedness

Besides civil emergencies, first aid can come in useful even in a benign home environment. Earlier, we saw participants applying their first aid skills in a common scenario - where an elderly person falls at home. Faced with an aging population, it is critical that we have more people trained who can treat simple injuries, as well as, identify symptoms that indicate that

the victim requires more serious medical attention.

Beyond our shores, the growing number of major civil emergencies, especially terrorist attacks, underscores the importance of being prepared at all times. This is the premise on which the SG Secure movement was founded. The threat of terrorism is real and the only way to counter that is for society to be prepared - physically and mentally. It is key to keeping Singapore strong. By equipping yourself with emergency preparedness and first aid skills, you can help those around you in any crises.

I commend the Singapore Red Cross for its steadfast commitment towards enhancing community resilience, through its civil emergency response, blood donor recruitment programme, first aid training and advocacy and youth development. Your humanitarian services also help to empower and uplift the most vulnerable. Besides teaching and training people in various first aid skills, the Singapore Red Cross also champions the "Community-Led Action for Resilience," mobilising volunteers to care for the vulnerable in their neighbourhood.

‘Kampung Spirit’ is key to Community Resilience

I am happy to note that Singapore Red Cross had partnered local community organisations in Tampines to deliver ElderAid to the seniors living on their own. The residents have learnt useful first aid and eldercare skills. Those trained have in turn served as first aiders at community events and befriended vulnerable neighbours through regular home visits. This kampung spirit - looking out for one another, caring for our neighbours - contributes directly to a cohesive and resilient community. Today, Red Cross volunteers have recruited community volunteers from South East to serve the seniors and vulnerable amongst our midst. I encourage all of you to join this movement.

Last month, the Singapore Red Cross has launched HoME+ (pronounced HOME-Plus) to bring Home Monitoring and Eldercare services to the elderly in the North and South East District. These efforts not only build community bonds, but also help reduce vulnerability and increase community resilience.

We need to build a resilient people - citizens who are compassionate, with gracious hearts. It is also part of the many helping hands approach to keep Singapore strong and secure. Events like today's Championships encourage active citizenry and bode well for building strong and united communities.

To all the Red Cross Youth here today - I wish to say, together with your parents and your teachers, that I am proud of your active participation, and your growth as humanitarians and

youth leaders. Regardless the results today - you are all winners, enablers and agents of positive change.

Thank you.