

**SPEECH BY MR MASAGOS ZULKIFLI BIN MASAGOS MOHAMAD,
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER RESOURCES
AT SINGAPORE RED CROSS' WORLD FIRST AID DAY 2016,
AT OUR TAMPINES HUB ON 10 SEPTEMBER AT 9AM**

Benjamin William
Singapore Red Cross Secretary General

Mr Laurence Goh
Singapore Red Cross Council Member

Residents of Tampines

Friends of the Singapore Red Cross

Good morning. It is my pleasure to join you in commemorating World First Aid Day at the all-new Our Tampines Hub.

We have a great atmosphere here, but I wish to first make a very serious point. I have staggering and sobering numbers to share.

- In Singapore, 70 percent of out-of-hospital collapses occur at home. Often, anxiety grips and people do not know what to do, apart from calling a relative, family doctor, neighbour or the ambulance.
- About 60 percent of casualties do not receive any form of bystander assistance before the arrival of the ambulance.
- Unfortunately, brain cells start dying after 4 minutes of no blood-flow.
- The survival rate of the victim decreases by 7 percent to 10 percent with every minute's delay in providing life-saving CPR or using an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Machine.
- Every year, nearly 3,000 people in Singapore die from heart attacks. In a house visit recently, one of the volunteers had a heart attack, even he himself was in denial. s

If all of us can identify the signs of a cardiac arrest, know how to perform the CPR, we can actually save many lives. We can change those statistics, and we must try.

I am therefore very heartened to see so many of you today, proactively taking the first step to acquire first aid skills, these are assets. It is always comforting to know that people are learning first aid because they know why it is important. Not only will it benefit you and your loved ones, you will also make a difference to the community at large.

Having learnt first aid skills, we can also spread the message. Make your time today even more meaningful, by going the extra mile and sharing what you have learnt and experienced today on social media - these skills will stand you, your family and friends in good stead when faced with a medical emergency.

Reinventing First Aid Learning

The Singapore Red Cross has been at the forefront of national efforts to have “one first aider in every home”; or if you cannot have a first aider in every home, it will be good to have a first aider in every block, a person who knows what to do in emergencies. Singapore Red Cross has ramped up its offering with a suite of new-to-market courses customised for special groups. I am glad that through your efforts to promote the learning of first aid, you are also making a critical contribution to the SG Secure movement.

From *Junior first aid* for children aged four to 11; to *Eldercare first aid* for caregivers; from being the first to offer the *Citizen First Responder*; to what we are doing today, the launch of the *Psychological First Aid* today, I commend the Singapore Red Cross for reinventing first aid learning to keep pace with societal needs. And for making first aid learning fun for youth - evident in the largest first aid demonstration which we will see in action later.

I am heartened to note that the Singapore Red Cross has chosen to make Psychological First Aid Course available to the public. I think, psychological first aid is more relevant today than it was before - with the global threat of terrorism looming over us.

The attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015 and in Jakarta just this year, it is becoming closer and closer. We are going to face our first attack from terrorism. These are an instructional lessons to all of us to be prepared. Earlier in March, Minister K Shanmugam announced the SG Secure Movement to make sure we are ready - to ensure our community's response to counter the threat of terrorism.

In this regard, psychological first aid can be viewed as an important additional tool to empower Singapore residents to provide encouragement and support to victims should a crisis situation occur. It is important to strengthen the resilience of the community and the nation to deal with crisis that come our way. It is also the process for community bonding, as we look out for each other and stand alongside one another in solidarity, in times of pain, sorrow or tragedy. When the earthquake in Kobe occurred, people died, people supported each other.

A Resilient Singapore

Over the past two years, Tampines West and Tampines Central Constituencies have partnered the Singapore Red Cross in its Community-Led Action for Resilience (C.L.A.R.E) programme. Our residents have learnt useful first aid skills and are prepared to respond to emergencies. They have also befriended vulnerable neighbours and now conduct regular home visits to the vulnerable that bring immense joy and assurance to elders - especially those who live alone. It is important as our neighbours grow older and live alone. If we smell something foul from our, it is important to alert the people in our community.

The Red Cross C.L.A.R.E programme has successfully established three first aid posts in Tampines West and will establish another three at Tampines Central by end of this year. The

Red Cross had also conducted training in Psychological First Aid and Eldercare training for the resident-volunteers. C.L.A.R.E volunteers have also served as first aiders in community events; including Tampines West National Day Carnival in August. These efforts not only build community bonds, but also help reduce vulnerability and increase community resilience. C.L.A.R.E is a great model that can be duplicated across other parts of our island, for a strong, secure and cohesive nation.

This is the best way to promote kindness, graciousness and the spirit of volunteerism in our community, we must continue efforts that make our nation state one that is strong physically and psychologically.

To all of you, and all the certified first aiders and volunteers in Singapore, Happy World First Aid Day!

Thank you.