

**ADDRESS BY MR MASAGOS ZULKIFLI, MINISTER FOR
SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT & SECOND MINISTER FOR HEALTH,
SOCIAL SERVICE SUMMIT 2023 ON 18 JULY 2023**

Ms Anita Fam,
President of NCSS,

Distinguished guests,

Friends and partners from the Social Service Sector

Introduction

1. A very good morning to all. The annual Social Service Summit is an event that I look forward to attending every year. Being surrounded by like-minded partners in the sector is both inspiring and invigorating.
2. The theme for this year's Summit is "Strengthening Connections, Partnering for Impact." As problems facing Singaporeans become more complex, and issues more wide-ranging and inter-connected, no single agency can solve these issues alone. We will increasingly need to work across boundaries, connecting and partnering with each other. I have seen encouraging examples of SSAs who have worked with others to serve service users in a more holistic manner. MSF and NCSS have also stepped up efforts to forge closer partnerships with the community and other organisations to collectively strengthen our ecosystem of support for individuals and families.

Shift towards sustainable philanthropy

3. Beyond partnerships between the people and public sector, it is important that we form cross-sector partnerships with the private sector and leverage the strong capabilities of corporates. This is timely, as over the years, there has been a growing interest for corporates to take a strategic approach in their corporate social responsibility efforts. There is a deep desire to move away from ad-hoc giving and instead, explore how they can create sustained impact and see tangible outcomes. We have observed that many companies based here want to contribute to Singapore and want to do so meaningfully. More are committing to regular donations and volunteerism and weaving social impact into their corporate purpose and making it part of their DNA. We, as a sector, need to harness this interest by providing more enabling platforms.

4. We have launched several initiatives to support corporates to embed giving more deeply. For example, Change for Charity was launched by the Community Chest earlier this year as part of its 40th Anniversary. Through this initiative, corporates can enable their customers to give conveniently and regularly to Community Chest by incorporating a giving mechanism into their business model. This complements our SHARE programme, which allows corporates to promote giving among their staff, through their monthly payroll. Some corporates have gone further, by matching the donations from their employees.

Harnessing partnerships to amplify social impact

5. We need to continue increasing the avenues for cross-sector partnerships where both corporates and SSAs leverage each other's strengths. This will enable the sector to connect the dots between needs and services, thereby amplifying impact.
6. From the corporates' perspective, deep community knowledge is required to harness resources for meaningful social impact. Corporates need to be more intimately aware of the needs and opportunities in the social service sector by using the ground knowledge and data that SSAs possess. Corporates should also embrace impact measurement to ensure that their operations generate value for society.
7. In turn, from SSAs' perspective, there is a need to better understand corporates' business models and expertise. This will enable SSAs and corporates to speak the same language to facilitate mutually beneficial partnerships. This will drive shared value, where the corporate activity generates value for both the business and the community.
8. As part of the Summit programme, NCSS and the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) collaborated to bring over 80 corporates to the inaugural State of Play to better understand the sector's work and increase shared value. This will take place tomorrow and corporates will gain insights to Singapore's social landscape as well as go on a guided tour of the Transformation Marketplace. At the marketplace, they will get to experience technology solutions within the residential home and community service settings, made possible by support from NCSS and the Agency for Integrated Care. These solutions have brought about greater delivery of social services, and technology transformations. I hope these interactions will spark interest and conversations and eventually, bring about more cross-sector collaborations.

Development of the Sustainable Philanthropy Framework

9. To enable more sustained impact, we plan to go one step further. We want to help corporates measure their impact and establish norms for companies to strive towards. During my conversations with various corporate leaders, many have shared their challenges. One of it being the lack of clarity in the “Social” aspect of their Environmental, Social and Governance objectives, also known as ESG. They have asked for greater guidance to achieve their social goals.
10. Moving forward, we want to provide a systematic framework for corporates and other organisations to take a more strategic, long-term approach towards contributing to the community and playing a bigger role in meeting social service needs. **I am therefore pleased to announce that NCSS and NVPC, together with other partners, will be developing a Sustainable Philanthropy Framework. This will be launched by Q1 2024.** This framework will provide corporates with a standardised metrics to measure, monitor, and benchmark the social impact of their giving, volunteering, and inclusive hiring practices. Through this framework, corporates will be able to fulfil their social and business goals more effectively. Over time, we hope that corporates can strengthen their corporate purpose and make improvements to their social impact.
11. The Framework will be accompanied by a playbook, which would include steps and best practices to guide corporates on how to meet their ‘Social’ goals and strengthen their sustainable philanthropy journey. It will also complement existing frameworks such as enabling corporates to measure the “S” in their ESG efforts and defining the Society Pillar of NVPC’s Corporate Purpose Framework, launched earlier this year.
12. NCSS and NVPC are bringing different sectors and partners to the table to develop this together. They include MSF, SG Cares Office in the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Singapore Centre for Social Enterprise (raiSE), as well as ecosystem partners. With this framework, we hope for corporates to deepen or broaden their giving, incorporate doing good and doing well as part of corporates’ strategies, and eventually address social issues and turn giving into a competitive advantage.
13. As the framework guides corporates to do philanthropy more meaningfully, it will also take into account that corporates are at different stages of their philanthropic journey. Some corporates are starting out on the journey and are keen to contribute. Some are keen to further their giving and be more intentional about philanthropy. Some others are experienced and want to strengthen their giving and be part of the solution to complex social issues. Such organisations

aim to go beyond funding direct services, and invest in areas like research and innovation.

14. One example is the Philanthropreneur-in-Residence (PIR) programme, launched by Quantedge Foundation last year to advance social mobility in Singapore. The programme incubates social sector champions and helps them develop and scale up their best ideas. Beyond funding, they will receive holistic end-to-end support, including strategy development, networking opportunities, capacity building and executive support. This is different from the traditional grant-making approach and instead, focuses on collaboration to enable the sector to develop better solutions to uplift individuals and families in need. I am happy to note that Quantedge Foundation has planned to set aside \$5 million for this programme, with the view to galvanise like-minded philanthropists to join the movement.
15. As a new generation of employees enter the workforce, most of them see social impact as a key marker of companies. As such, I believe that companies will only stand to benefit by prioritising the “Social” of their ESG objectives.
16. We will continue to engage relevant stakeholders over the next few months and we invite corporates to come on board and share your views and feedback. The framework will be accompanied by a playbook with steps that corporates can take to cultivate shared values in their employees and showcase collective impact in their sustainable philanthropy journey.

Enhancing the capabilities of our SSAs

17. As we press on to forge stronger partnerships, there is also a need to build stronger SSAs. I am very pleased that many SSAs have tapped on the Community Capability Trust (or CCT) administered by NCSS, to build up stronger organisational capabilities. Strong organisation capabilities are vital for SSAs to transform themselves to "SSA 3.0". This includes having strong professional workforce, augmented by volunteers and enabled by digitalisation, so as to better meet the needs of service users.
18. At the core of every strong organisation, is its people. We must continue to invest resources to develop and retain talents within the sector, people who are committed and equipped to provide quality social services to those in need. To this end, MSF and NCSS remain committed to work with partners to improve people practices in SSAs and support our sector professionals. As part of the Community Capability Trust, for instance, we will continue to curate initiatives and provide resources to help SSAs strengthen their people practice capabilities. We will be announcing these upcoming initiatives later this year.

19. The well-being of our sector professionals is also a top priority. NCSS has rolled out an online Wellness Resource Hub for social service professionals, to enable them to access resources and practical tips on their mental, physical, and social well-being and direct them to resources to seek professional help. Supervisors and human resource personnel can also access resources to manage their employees' mental well-being. NCSS will continue to partner SSAs to review how best to support and strengthen workplace practices. I encourage you, especially if you are supervisor or HR personnel, to tap on the available resources to better support your employees.

Closing

20. In conclusion, as the theme for this year's Summit aptly highlights, let's strengthen our connections and partner for impact. With each of us – the Government, the community, and individuals – doing our part and working in sync, we can best combine our efforts to support those who want to secure a better future for themselves and for their families.
21. This is also timely because MSF has designated 2023 as the Year of Celebrating Social Service Partners. We want to recognise the integral contributions of partners like you. Hence, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone. Whether you are from a corporate or SSA, a sector professional or volunteer, thank you for working with us to nurture and build lives together. This way, we can truly achieve the collective vision outlined in our 4ST sector roadmap, where everyone is empowered to live a life of dignity in a caring and inclusive society.
22. I wish you all a fruitful learning and networking session today. Thank you.