

**ADDRESS BY MR SIM GIM GUAN,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE
ON THE SOCIAL SERVICE SECTOR STRATEGIC THRUSTS
AT THE SOCIAL SERVICE SUMMIT
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 05 JULY 2017 AT MARINA BAY SANDS**

1. Good morning. And to all our Muslim friends, Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri. This vision you see on the screen, was developed over the past year, involving many stakeholders across the 3P sector. It is the vision for the 4ST, the social service sector strategic thrusts. This vision resonates with me and I believe, is a vision that you aspire to as well.

Vision: Every Person Empowered to Live with Dignity in a Caring and Inclusive Society

2. People often ask me, how different is it to be in the social service sector. I have been in NCSS for about three and a half years. In this sector, I interact with people from across the entire spectrum of society. From the people we serve, to the people who serve them, and those that provide the critical support needed, including volunteers and funders. And one common trait I see across those serving in this sector, is that it is about purpose, passion and perseverance. I am grateful for this privilege to work with a purpose-driven and committed **social service tribe** comprising individuals such as yourselves. Your continued work and partnership will help make this vision a reality.

3. Over the past year, we have started to share about how we can all do better in achieving this vision, and on behalf of those who were involved in the process, I would like to share some of our views.

Starting with the First Thrust.

4. As we are in the midst of Hari Raya celebrations, I am reminded of PPIS's work. **PPIS** had observed challenges that minor couples face and responded by starting PPIS INSPIRASI, which sought not just to empower the couples with knowledge and

skills to address their challenges but also to empower their family members, so that they too could journey with minor couples.

5. Many minor couples found the programme impactful and refreshing. It led some to initiate Club INSPIRASI as a way for graduands to improve the quality of life of other vulnerable persons in the community through volunteerism. Some graduands are even giving back by serving as marriage mentors for other minor couples.

6. There are many other examples of how individuals, families and communities are empowered to own challenges and lead in developing solutions. They do so by being involved in the community, connected to resources and participating actively in making decisions on their quality of life.

On to the Second Thrust.

7. Entities in the social service ecosystem, such as foundations, funders, social enterprises and social service organisations, need to be more effective. This can be achieved by sharpening and harnessing their social purpose, scaling innovative and sustainable solutions and improving organisational capabilities.

8. Purpose is powerful. When entities have a compelling social purpose and communicate it proactively, they can mobilise individuals and communities to contribute their time, talents and resources to address needs.

9. Before the Ice Bucket Challenge, I am sure not many of us would know about **Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis**, or ALS. Its creator Jon Duschinsky was in Singapore last month. He emphasised the importance of growing shared ownership by providing opportunities for individuals to show their support and creating tools for supporters of a cause to become its ambassadors.

10. The **Yellow Ribbon Project** is yet another example. Since 2004, it has increased public acceptance and employment of former offenders. This has improved their self-reliance and quality of life, and reduced re-offending rates. Many individuals

and companies have also become ambassadors. It has even inspired similar movements in other countries.

11. We need to help one another to become stronger. As we learn from each other, we can glean lessons and develop resources which benefit more organisations. An example is the **Volunteer Management Playbook on Service-Based Volunteerism**, which is in your summit pack. It was developed jointly by 10 organisations and provides a step-by-step guide on how to implement service-based volunteerism.¹

For the Third Thrust.

12. Leveraging on communities and more broadly, the social service ecosystem, was a theme that emerged during the NCSS Board Study Trip to South Korea in March.

13. The **Taiwha Fountain House** works with Persons with Mental Health Issues and left a deep impression. It addresses its service users as members, similar to **South Central Community FSC**. This reflects its philosophy of leadership and ownership by members in designing solutions to meet their needs and aspirations.

14. It has agreements with more than 40 businesses in the local community to offer employment to its members. These opportunities comprise “tasters” for members to find a good fit, as well as contract and permanent positions. These opportunities are also co-designed with businesses to address its members’ concerns and hence, vary in work scope, work settings and working hours.

15. These collaborations have improved the work experience and performance of its members, sharpened social instincts of businesses, and increased the community’s acceptance of Persons with Mental Health Issues.

¹ AMKFSC, AWWA, CARE Singapore, Lakeside, Lions Befrienders, MINDS, NTUC Health Co-Operative Limited, Rainbow Centre, Students Care Service and TOUCH.

16. This is an example of a caring, collaborative and impactful social service ecosystem. One that strengthens collaboration among the 3P sectors, improves the experience of vulnerable persons and increases acceptance of them.

17. Achieving this will require all of us to share our time, talents and resources with one another so that vulnerable persons are empowered holistically, and to be change agents of inclusion in our communities and interactions.

18. Achieving our shared vision will require us all to **exercise leadership** in our organisations and in our interactions with our stakeholders.

19. We will need to rally our service users, our boards, our colleagues, our volunteers and our partners, everyone, to empower individuals, their families and the communities. We will need to redefine the social service ecosystem, firestart collaboration and champion inclusion in our communities.

20. In all of these actions, we will need to shape the mindsets of those we interact with. Thus, I am grateful to our panellists who will share their views and experiences on the areas shown on screen, where mindset shifts in the social service ecosystem will be key to achieving our shared vision.

21. When we come together in doing these well, it is like putting in place a lighthouse, casting a ray of light that radiates with purpose and warmth, so that even in the darkest storm and coldest night, it provides a beacon of hope, even as we journey towards our vision of “every person empowered to live with dignity in a caring and inclusive society”.

22. Thus, I call upon every one of us to embark on this journey. I do so not as the CEO of NCSS, but as a fellow citizen who wants to make Singapore a better home for our loved ones and future generations. Our shared vision is bold and ambitious. But it is also achievable. This is a cause worth fighting for, and the journey begins today. Let us step up to the plate, Right here, right now, together, We can Achieve.
