

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR SIM GIM GUAN,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE
AT SSI ENABLES
TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2015**

Mr Ng Cher Pong, Chief Executive, Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA),

Professor Etienne Wenger,

Esteemed guests and fellow colleagues from social service organisations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1 Good afternoon and Happy Lunar New Year. Welcome to 'SSI Enables 2015', organised by the Social Service Institute, the human capital development arm of the National Council of Social Service.

2 In his delivery of the Budget Statement last week, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, stressed the importance of lifelong learning to develop knowledge and

mastery relevant to our jobs. He spoke about how a better skilled workforce can push our economy to the next level. On the personal level, being more equipped to do one's work leads to higher competency, better performance and greater job satisfaction.

3 In the social services, we too believe in continued learning and upskilling to build a stronger sector. The Social Service Institute is a key enabler of learning in the sector and trains over 10,000 people annually. I would like to take this opportunity to thank WDA for working closely with us in appointing the Social Service Institute as a Continuing Education and Training Centre for the sector and continually helping the Institute adopt the Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) framework for its programmes. In introducing an assessment component for the programmes' curriculum, learners are able to get a better sense of their competency levels. We aim to increase the number of WSQ programmes this year to offer you more choices in capability building to help you step up in your career.

4 Beyond learning in the classroom, the Social Service Institute champions Learning as a Community, which is also the theme for today's seminar. There is much social service practitioners can learn

from their peers and counterparts serving similar groups of clients. When they come together to share best practices and tacit knowledge with one another, and create tool kits for use by other sector professionals, the talent pooling enables the community to power up in the various domains of expertise.

5 Communities of Practice (CoPs) is an important means to facilitate such social learning. The Social Service Institute has played the role of a CoP sponsor to 18 CoPs with a total of 150 members, providing them process support, consultation services and logistic assistance. Since CoPs were introduced to the Institute's learning community in 2012, they have helped learners beyond the classroom setting. In the past one year, our CoPs have evolved to also serve the purpose of supporting practitioners in new and emerging areas, such as Narrative Practice and Person-Centred Approach.

6 It is not easy keeping up a CoP, which is essentially a group of people with varying personalities and levels of commitment. And because CoPs are largely self-governed, it requires much discipline and rigour to keep them running and productive. We are therefore pleased that Ms Lee Mei Ping, a Champion of one of our earliest CoPs, the

Person-Centred Approach (PCA) CoP, will be sharing with us their success story. I would also like to take this time to congratulate all 14 members in the PCA CoP, who are from 10 different social service organisations in eldercare, on the launch of their fruit of labour, the second edition of the PCA Toolkit.

7 It is also our huge honour to have Professor Wenger as our keynote speaker today to share more about CoPs and social learning . Professor Wenger is widely known for his work on CoP and is a global thought leader in the field of social learning theory. He has worked with many organisations across the world to cultivate CoPs.

8 Besides Professor Wenger, the Social Service Institute will be inviting other renowned figures in different fields to speak to you under the 'SSI Expert Series'. Some of the speakers we have confirmed include Professor Manuel Eisner from the Comparative and Developmental Criminology at the University of Cambridge and Dr Monica Fitzgerald from the Institute of Behavioral Science at the University of Colorado-Boulder. Like SSI Enables, the SSI Expert Series is designed to build knowledge and gain new perspectives. Do look out for our eDMs and register for these talks.

9 All these initiatives are part of the Institute’s learning ecosystem to help social service practitioners turn knowledge into practice. The Social Service Institute will continue to expand the sector’s body of knowledge in its role as the focal point for training and manpower development for the sector through its various learning platforms such as SSI Enables and the “SSI Expert Series”.

10 Aristotle said, “For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.” I urge you to make full use of the Institute’s resources, and platforms of learning and practice to enrich and empower yourselves. I wish you a fruitful session ahead. Thank you.