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WELCOME ADDRESS BY DR MALIKI BIN OSMAN,
MAYOR OF SOUTH EAST DISTRICT
AT LAUNCH OF LAW AWARENESS WEEKS @ CDC 2018

Mr Edwin Tong,
Senior Minister of State for Ministry of Law
and Ministry of Health
Grassroots Adviser to Marine Parade GRC GROs

Chairman Mayor Low Yen Ling,
Mayor Denise Phua and Desmond Choo
Mr Dennis Chee, PBM, District Councillor of North West CDC representing Mayor
Teo Ho Pin

Mr Gregory Vijayendran,
Chairman of Law Society Pro Bono Services,

District Councillors,

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Wisma Geylang Serai

1. A very warm welcome to our new home in Wisma Geylang Serai. South East CDC is most delighted to host the Launch of Law Awareness Weeks @CDC 2018.

Continuous Partnership with Law Society Pro Bono

2. Community Pro Bono Legal Clinic was first kick-started in 2007 by South East CDC and North West CDC. In 2014, an MOU was signed between the Law Society and the five CDCs to provide Community Pro Bono Legal Clinic in all five districts. This year marks the fifth year of partnership between the five CDCs and Law Society Pro Bono Services. We are grateful for the strong support of pro bono lawyers and student volunteers.

3. Understanding the law is not easy and going through any legal process can be a daunting experience to many people. To facilitate a greater appreciation of the law and enhance our residents' basic legal literacy, we need to do more to reach out to our residents so that they are more aware of their legal rights and when to exercise them.

4. One year after the Pro Bono Legal Clinic started, in 2015, we wanted to ensure that more residents are able to understand the law and navigate basic issues. As such,

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we worked with Law Society Pro Bono Service to penetrate the Community by conducting Law Talks of various topics, ensuring residents the access to legal knowledge that are relatable or applicable to their lives. From a one-week Law Talk then, we are happy to share that this year, we will be running Law Talks over six weeks.

Equipping the community with basic legal literacy

5. As our society matures, our lifestyle and patterns evolve in tandem. For example, In July this year, Straits Times reported that 22.1% of marriages in 2017, nearly a quarter of all registered marriages were inter-ethnic, double that in 1997. The numbers for example, reflect the need to educate residents on legal knowledge such as Family Civil Law and Family Syariah Law.

6. In a research done by social media management platforms, We Are Social and Hootsuite, just earlier this year – it was found that 84% of Singaporeans use the Internet. With youth and seniors picking up the internet at an alarming rate, it is imperative that we educate our community on legal distress one may face using the Internet, or should cyberbullying occur who they can turn to for help. With an educated community, and equipping it with clear avenues residents can turn to in difficult times, the community can be protected from unnecessary stress and anxiety.

7. In this regard, the partnership with Law Society Pro Bono Services has greatly benefitted and will continue to benefit our residents. At trying times, residents know where who they can approach for legal advice reduces some level of anxiety for them in times of need. During good times, having basic legal know-how is an empowerment that residents can tap on if they themselves or someone else in the community, say a relative, a friend or even a neighbour, requires it.

8. This year, we are happy to share that our community partners, such as from Grassroots and Voluntary Welfare organisations, have signed up a total of more than 70 Law Talks across Singapore. Some of the more popular topics include Family Law, both Civil and Syariah, Advance Planning and Community and Neighbours Disputes, in multiple language – in English, Malay and Mandarin. These topics tie closely to the heart of many within the community, and I hope that they will find these talks useful for their everyday lives.

Thanking Partners

9. We look forward to the continuous partnership with Law Society Pro Bono Services, our community partners for bringing the Law Talks to the community, as well as the legal fraternity – the law firms, pro bono lawyers, and student volunteers.

10. Thank you.