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**SPEECH FOR DR TEO HO PIN,
MAYOR OF NORTH WEST DISTRICT**

**LAUNCH OF LAW AWARENESS WEEK @CDC 2017 AND
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) SIGNING
CEREMONY ON THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 6.45PM
AT SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW FUNCTION HALL**

Senior Minister of State for Law & Finance, Ms Indranee Rajah
Mayors Ms Low Yen Ling, Ms Denise Phua, Mr Desmond Choo
Grassroots Adviser Mr Lim Biow Chuan, PBM
Mr Lim Hock Yu, Deputy Chief Executive, People's Association
Mr Gregory Vijayendran, President of the Law Society of Singapore
Deans and Professors of IHLs
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good evening to all. On behalf of the Mayors, let me welcome you to the Launch of the Law Awareness Week @CDC 2017 and the MOUs Signing Ceremony between the CDCs, Law Society Pro Bono Services and the three Institutes of Higher Learning (National University of Singapore, Singapore Management University and Singapore University of Social Sciences).

Meeting Community Needs

2 North West CDC is very happy to host the launch of the Law Awareness Week @CDC this year. This is the third year the CDCs take turn to organise the launch. We started the idea of decentralised legal talks with Law Society because we wanted to bring important services like this

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closer to the residents. In the past such talks were centralised, held usually at the Supreme Court, and not so accessible to residents living in other parts of Singapore. By tapping on the strength of CDCs' network, we can now achieve the objective of letting residents have greater access to legal education.

3 Besides the launch, I am also happy to report that this is the 10th year, NW CDC together with the Law Society is running its Community Legal Clinic (CLC) @ NW. The success of this partnership together with the CLC @ SE resulted in the signing of MOU with all CDCs three years ago. Over the years, with the increase of legal clinics, our residents will have more access to clinics which are nearer their home or their workplace. Today, we will reaffirm this commitment, widen our network further, and slowly go beyond legal awareness.

Promoting Collaboration for the Common Good

4 This year marks the 20th anniversary of the CDCs. I like to take this opportunity to share with you the raison d'être of the CDCs in collaborating with the Law Society and the importance in expanding the network of this collaboration.

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5 The CDCs were set up in 1997 as a new platform for the able to help the less able. At that time, the idea of SG Cares has not crystallised yet. But the CDCs are already showing care, partnering the corporate, reaching out to the able and encouraging volunteerism. The CDCs also realise that whatever projects we do, the government cannot do it alone, we need the collaboration of private and people sectors to help the community so that it is sustainable, so that there is a sense of ownership. With community ownership, comes resilience because the support is mutual, and this community self-help will strengthen cohesion within the community. Over time, we learn to trust each other and have confidence in each other. The CDCs, being the aggregator of resources, look for resources within the community, tap on them to meet community needs, thereby empowering the community.

6 This approach in getting the able to help the less able is the ingredient of SG Cares @ CDC. When we grow the pro bono community legal service network on the ground, getting more students, lawyers and law firms -big and small, we will in turn have greater capacity to help more residents.

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7 The second MOU to be signed today is an important milestone in the pro bono community legal service network because our three key education institutions (NUS, SMU and SUSS) are now coming on board. To date, a total of 350 NUS and SMU law students volunteered with the LAW @CDC as well as the community legal clinics. I learnt that among the student volunteers, two of them, Tan Yu Qing, a second year NUS Law Student and Zhang Guangyu, a second year SMU Law Student are also grassroots leaders in the Youth Executive Committee, or YEC in short. It is heartening to see the selfless giving of Yu Qing and Guangyu as we know it is never easy to cope with demands of study, yet at the same time find time for volunteer work. I would like to thank all student volunteers for coming forward and hope that more will be inspired by the passion of Yu Qing and Guangyu and find joy and fulfilment in volunteering. We also like to thank the NUS and SMU Deans and Professors for stepping forward, contributing ideas and giving guidance to these students, inspiring them to give their best and more. To our new partner SUSS, welcome and we look forward to working with you.

8 The community also requires other legal needs beyond legal awareness. One area is the Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA). Many people are not aware of its importance. Even if they do, the low-income

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residents may not know how to complete the forms and afford the certification by the Lawyers. The NUS and CDC piloted the LPA series, getting law students to help in completing the form, and the lawyers certifying either pro bono or lo bono. We have very good feedback from the Grassroots leaders and residents.

Conclusion

9 Finally, I would like to congratulate everyone on the launch of Law Awareness Week 2017! A big thank you to our volunteer lawyers and law students who have been working hard behind the scenes to make such services available to fellow Singaporeans!

10 Thank you and have a great evening ahead.
