

**DELIVERED SPEECH BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER,
COORDINATING MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC POLICIES AND
MINISTER FOR FINANCE HENG SWEE KEAT**

**AT THE LAUNCH OF CDC VOUCHERS SCHEME TRANCHE 2
25 JANUARY 2021 (MONDAY), 4.30PM TO 5.30PM**

Mayor Low Yen Ling, Chairman of Mayors' Committee,
Mayors Denise, Desmond, Alex and Fahmi,
Mr Yeo Hiang Meng, President of the Federation of Merchants'
Associations Singapore,
Mr Lim Hock Yu, Chief Executive Director, People's Association,
Those tuning in on Zoom from district constituencies and staff at CDCs,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good afternoon.
2. I am very happy to launch the extension of the CDC Vouchers scheme, together with our Mayors and Mr Yeo.
 - a. In June last year, I launched the CDC Vouchers scheme virtually. Today, I am glad to be able to do so in-person.
 - b. Compared to last June, Singapore is in a much better position today. We have managed to contain the spread of the virus and vaccination is underway.

- c. But the fight against COVID-19 is far from over. The virus is still raging in many parts of the world. It will be some time before our economy fully recovers, and some sectors remain hard-hit.
 - d. Many families and livelihoods continue to be impacted by COVID-19. But no matter how difficult their circumstances are, no one will be left to walk this journey alone.
3. We committed close to \$100 billion over five Budgets to support workers, businesses and households through this period.
- a. The national schemes that we rolled out have helped our people. But some of them have higher needs or face more challenging circumstances, which require different parts of our society to come together to complement the national effort.
4. This is where our CDCs play a very important role. Since inception, our CDCs have been working with the community to support the vulnerable among us.
- a. As our CDCs have established strong ground networks, and good knowledge of local needs, they are able to raise awareness of Government schemes, and supplement our national initiatives with local ones. In so doing, the CDCs multiply the effectiveness and increase the reach of schemes to support our residents and businesses.
 - b. Each CDC has its own programmes to meet the needs of our local community. But our five CDCs also work closely together.

Since the start of COVID-19, they have cooperated on more than 100 initiatives to help those impacted, working in partnership with the community. This is the spirit of Singapore Together.

5. The CDC Vouchers Scheme is a good example of how the five CDCs have worked together.

- a. With a \$20 million grant from the Ministry of Finance, the island-wide scheme defrays the cost of living for lower-income families, and supports local heartland shops and hawkers who are facing the impact of the pandemic.
- b. Almost 350,000 households have collected their vouchers. The vouchers have been used to redeem food, essential items and services at participating hawker stalls and merchants island wide. I am very glad to know that the vouchers have benefitted these families.
- c. During my walkabouts in Bedok, I was also very glad to learn from our hawkers and merchants that the CDC Vouchers have given their businesses a boost during these difficult times. Today, we have more than 8,100 merchants participating in the scheme, and we welcome more to come on board.
- d. The pandemic has changed the way we live and the way we work. I am also glad to also see that many of our hawkers and merchants have adopted e-payments and digital solutions. This

will spur improvements in operations and help them to engage existing and reach new customers.

6. During this challenging period, household expenses will continue to weigh on the minds of less well-off families. So we have decided to commit an additional \$20 million for a second tranche of vouchers.

a. The second tranche of vouchers will benefit up to 400,000 Singaporean households. We hope that the vouchers will continue to help families in need.

b. From 8th February, eligible households can collect their vouchers at Community Clubs and Centres. The vouchers will be valid till 30th September this year.

7. I meet our Mayors regularly. They have been working very hard. Under their leadership, our CDCs are continuing to respond to local needs of our community, and help our residents overcome the challenges that they are facing. We continue to encourage our CDCs to find new ways in which they can do this better and continue to build strong partnerships with our community.

8. Let us continue to face the challenges ahead head-on, stand in solidarity with one another, and emerge stronger as a united Singapore.

9. Thank you.

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