

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE
BY MR SIM GIM GUAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE (NCSS)
AT THE SSI GRADUATION AND AWARDS CEREMONY 2016
ON SATURDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2016

Mr Ong Ye Kung, Acting Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) and Senior Minister of State for Ministry of Defence

Ms Paula Parviainen, Ambassador of the Republic of Finland to Singapore

Mr Ng Cher Pong, Chief Executive / SkillsFuture Singapore and Deputy Secretary (SkillsFuture) for Ministry of Education

Mr Fong Yong Kian, Chief Executive, Tote Board

NCSS Board members,

Partners,

Graduands and Award Recipients,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1 Good afternoon. Welcome to the Social Service Institute (SSI) Graduation and Awards Ceremony 2016. First of all, my heartiest congratulations to all graduands, and scholarship and award recipients on achieving an important milestone in your life. And credit should also

go to your families, loved ones and organisations, who had given you tremendous support when you embarked on your learning journey.

2 This year, we welcome the largest number of graduands since the inception of SSI in 2003. Over 200 students will be graduating from programmes such as SSI's flagship Diploma in Social Service (DSS) and Higher Diploma in Social Service (HDSS) as well as the inaugural ACE Capstone Leadership Programme for Non-Profits. In addition, 100 promising students and social service practitioners will also be receiving various scholarships and awards today.

3 Among our graduands and recipients, some are new to the social service sector, while others are sector professionals who will be assuming greater responsibilities and new roles. Their achievements today will be a welcome boost to the sector's workforce and will further enhance the sector's capability.

Building Capability for the Sector

- ***Partnerships and Education Innovation 2020***

4 Sector professionals form the core of social service sector and are key to the capability of a social service organisation. At the Social Service Summit organised by NCSS in July, Minister for Social and

Family Development Mr Tan Chuan-Jin emphasised the importance of building strong and future-ready organisations that continually grow their capabilities and capacities both within and beyond the sector. Minister Tan added that social service organisations will need to pay attention to their internal capabilities to support the aspirations, nurture the passions, build careers and deepen skills of new entrants and sector professionals.

5 To support social service organisations in those aspects, SSI has been working with many education partners and government agencies to bring a range of quality programmes and courses to meet our professionals' learning needs. With the recent announcement regarding the formation of two new statutory boards – SkillsFuture Singapore and Workforce Singapore – the government seeks to organise its functions to sharpen focus on skills enhancement and employment for working adults. SSI will continue to work closely with SkillsFuture Singapore to build a vibrant landscape of high-quality training with an emphasis on continuous learning to address the manpower needs of the sector. This is amply demonstrated with SkillsFuture Singapore's renewal of SSI as a Continuing Education and Training centre to deliver training for the workforce in the social service sector for another three years from October 2016. With Workforce Singapore, SSI will develop a manpower

pipeline, support sector growth and match the right people to the right jobs.

6 Last month, SSI moved to its new premises at Central Plaza@Tiong Bahru. With this move, SSI has also embarked on **Education Innovation 2020** to shape the future of continuous learning for the sector by tapping on the opportunities made available by advancements in technology. SSI will work with SkillsFuture Singapore to deliver training programmes, via online and innovative blended learning approaches, by leveraging latest technologies, innovative pedagogies and hi-tech facilities at SSI's new premises. Lifelong learning is now even more accessible and engaging, and sector professionals can benefit from the convenience and better experience of learning anytime-anywhere.

- ***ACE Capstone Leadership Programme for Non-Profits – Enhancing Capability of Leaders***

7 Another significant initiative was the launch of the ACE Capstone Leadership Programme for Non-Profits in partnership with Tote Board this year. This pinnacle leadership programme involves strategic alliance and collaboration among the various leadership programme

providers – AALTO University, Singapore Management University's Lien Centre for Social Innovation) and the Centre for Non-Profit Leadership, with Social Service Institute playing the coordination role. The programme enriches senior leaders of the non-profit sector with deeper knowledge and skills in a macro, organisational and sector level so that they can lead their organisations more effectively. Besides adopting a practical and highly experiential form of learning, the programme also provides opportunities for these senior leaders to suggest changes and improvements to the sector through presentation of their projects to policy makers. Today, we have with us 26 senior leaders from non-profit sector who had participated in the inaugural run of this programme. We welcome more leaders to join this programme to further strengthen the capability of their organisations

8 Take for example Mr Paul Long, Executive Director at Family Life Society and a participant of the programme. Paul studied marketing and e-commerce, and had worked at two multinational corporations and a small medium enterprise before joining the social service sector in a leadership position. We need more individuals like Paul, who brings with him vast experience, skillsets and knowledge from the private sector. We need to constantly see things from fresh perspectives to bring about positive change. Injections of new knowledge and skills will stimulate us

to think of ways to improve how we work. Paul's experience taught him the importance of continuous learning and he was happy to find these opportunities in our sector. He is now an advocate in upskilling and lifelong learning. I am sure he will apply what he has learnt from the ACE Capstone Leadership Programme for Non-Profits to chart greater heights for his organisation.

- ***DSS and HDSS – Pathway for Aspiring Social Workers***

9 I am delighted to report that in total, 50 HDSS graduates have been accepted in the UniSIM Bachelor of Social Work from 2012 to 2016. Both DSS and HDSS programmes are part of this accelerated education pathway by SSI and UniSIM to help individuals with different educational background to ease into their roles in the social service sector. To provide mid-career professionals with an alternative pathway, SSI and UniSIM have also partnered Workforce Singapore to offer the Professional Conversion Programme for Social Workers. Together, these programmes serve to boost the number of social workers we need in Singapore. I am pleased to see that many of you have recognised the value of this pathway and have taken advantage of the opportunities now available to fulfil your aspiration to be a social worker.

10 One of the DSS graduands today is Ms Evelyn Ng, a Senior Care Associate at TOUCH Community Services (TOUCH Home Care). Evelyn started volunteering in a nursing home at the age of 16 and got more interested in serving seniors during her years in Institute of Technical Education. Through years of interacting with seniors, Evelyn can now converse fluently in various languages and dialects. Evelyn also conducts home visits to seniors and engages them in physiotherapy. She aspires to become a registered social worker and has embarked on this learning journey to reach her goal. DSS is Evelyn's first step and she is now pursuing the WSQ Diploma in Social Service. I am happy to see that she is progressing well and benefitting from this programme.

11 For those who may not be pursuing the UniSIM Bachelor of Social Work at this moment, the modules of DSS and HDSS will still provide you with the groundwork needed to take on more roles in the sector. The network of friends and social service practitioners that you forge in class will also continue to enrich you as you share work and life experiences with one another.

12 At this juncture, I would like to acknowledge SkillsFuture Singapore, Workforce Singapore and Tote Board for your strong partnership in strengthening the capabilities of our sector as well as their co-sponsorship of this graduation event. .

13 The social landscape is evolving and the road ahead will be challenging yet exciting. The ability to combine one's passion with a meaningful purpose – to make a positive difference to the lives of others and our society – brings great meaning to the work we do. We are driven by a strong desire to work together to empower those who need a bit more help than others. It is this common set of values that bond us together as a strong collective of people united by a common purpose and a shared cause that we are innately passionate about and committed to. My wish to all graduands, scholarships and award recipients is that your passion will continue to drive you, and that you will find fulfilment and success in your journey ahead. Congratulations once again and thank you.