

**REMARKS BY MR GOH PEI MING,
MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
AND MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AT INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER
MANAGERS DAY,
12 NOVEMBER 2025**

Ms Anita Fam, President of the National Council of Social Service
Volunteer Managers,
Partners,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

- 1 Good morning.
- 2 I am delighted to join you today to celebrate International Volunteer Managers Day, where we recognise the vital role of volunteer managers in the social service sector and the community.
- 3 This recognition resonates deeply with me as a community volunteer for over 18 years.
 - a. I began my grassroots service in Kampong Chai Chee in 2007, in the neighbourhood where I grew up. Serving alongside neighbours and friends reinforced my passion and belief in serving and giving back to the community.
 - b. Through the years in grassroots, I eventually assumed the role of Chairman of the Community Club based in Heartbeat@Bedok. It was also where I witnessed the importance of good volunteer management practices in building and retaining a pool of dedicated volunteers to serve the needs of the community. These experiences have shaped my understanding of what it truly means to build a “We First” society.

Building a "We First" Society

- 4 At this year's National Day Rally and the Opening of the 15th Parliament, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong spoke about the key tenets of a "We First" society – one that strives for the collective good, not just self-interest; and one where Singaporeans look out for one another and lift each other up.
- a. If Singaporeans only think about "What's in it for me?" in everything they do, then Singapore is in trouble. Having a "We" mindset, a care for the larger community, was what allowed our founding fathers to take care of one another and grit through our early years. Having a "We" mindset, during Covid-19, being willing to make small personal sacrifices and reaching out to others in need, was what got us through this darkest chapter. Having a "We" mindset, is an important value, a form of societal resilience, that will put us in good stead to overcome any crisis, any adversity, any challenge that will confront Singapore. Before you go away thinking we have a crisis, I have actually met many Singaporeans in my constituency, who are happy to volunteer their time and money.
- b. This transformation towards "We First" is up to **all of us** to shape together. With rapidly growing social needs, as our population ages, the social service sector is **one key arena where Singaporeans can step forward to serve. They can contribute to a wide variety of social service causes they feel passionately about, making a profound impact on the lives of many, especially the under-served and underprivileged.**

Next Bound of Social Service Volunteerism

- 5 To support this important work of volunteer recruitment and retention, NCSS has over the years built a strong foundation for volunteer management practices, including raising volunteer managers' capabilities and empowering them with enhanced resources to do this role more effectively.

a. NCSS' next focus is **expanding volunteering opportunities to match the growing number of people who want to contribute**, including corporate, community and youth volunteers in a sustained manner.

i. As sector developer, NCSS will work closely with social service agencies in various sub-sectors to redesign how services are delivered and curate meaningful volunteer roles in the process, **starting with children and youth services**.

ii. Volunteer roles and responsibilities differ greatly across sub-sectors. Over the next couple of years, NCSS will work closely with SSAs **at the sub-sector level** to systematically identify roles which lend themselves well to volunteers, for example befriending and care roles, teaching digital or financial literacy. We will also support you in onboarding and training the volunteers to take on these new roles. By doing so, we hope to achieve better matching between volunteers' interests and skills with community needs, and in so doing, significantly increase the number of regular volunteers, and the quality of service experienced by the users.

iii. As needs continue to grow, NCSS will review service models and support schemes to encourage our social service agencies to leverage volunteers more purposefully in their service delivery. This will complement existing initiatives such as the Tech and GO! Scheme, which provides support for technology solutions to increase productivity and enhance service delivery.

6 The other part of the equation is you: the volunteer managers. Today's event is aptly themed "We First: Strengthening Volunteerism for Collective Purpose".

a. This transformation **cannot happen without you, our volunteer managers**. You are the ones who identify and engage the volunteers, match

them to new roles, onboard them effectively, and provide them the training they need to succeed.

- 7 To further strengthen our volunteer management capabilities, I am **pleased to announce the launch of the Volunteer Management Toolkit 3.0.**
 - a. Co-created by NCSS and the sector, the toolkit provides practical tips for managing volunteers and helps organisations to strengthen their volunteer management frameworks to achieve better outcomes. Building on the earlier versions of the toolkit, the Volunteer Management Toolkit 3.0 introduces new content such as demographic-based engagement strategies that help retain regular volunteers and support service delivery, as well as risk management in volunteer programmes.
 - b. The key though, is to apply these resources and toolkits in the context of your sub-sector and agency; and **customise the approach that best suits your service delivery model, service users and volunteers.** I encourage you to use these insights to build meaningful partnerships that will grow and sustain your volunteer pool.

Volunteer Management in Action

- 8 The social service volunteer pool is large, and growing. According to the NCSS 2024 Membership Renewal Survey, 193 Volunteer Managers across 114 agencies engaged nearly 95,000 volunteers. That's **almost 500 volunteers per volunteer manager—imagine the dedication required to manage that many volunteers!**
 - a. This is why we must strengthen volunteerism for our common purpose – **not just as a nice-to-have, but as a critical foundation as we work towards a more sustainable and future-oriented social service sector.**
 - b. Let me share two wonderful examples.

- i. We have Serene Cheng from Filos Community Services. Growing up in a low-income family, Serene experienced first-hand the challenges faced by underprivileged families and their children. This shaped her empathy for the community and drove her commitment to closing equity gaps in society. Through her work as a Volunteer Manager, Serene led the coordination of the Empowerment Learning Journey for the family sub-sector in collaboration with NCSS, during which Filos shared best practices with fellow sector professionals.
- ii. In a similar vein, Denise Foo and her team from CampusImpact have been demonstrating purposeful cross-sector collaborations by bringing together over 80 community partners through 17 "Kopi Sessions" since 2020. Their skilful coordination has culminated in community-led initiatives like Kampung GiveBack, where seniors from AWWA Dementia Day Care Centre volunteer monthly with Nee Soon East Food Rescue, empowering service users to become active contributors in creating a caring Yishun for all.

Closing

- 9 As we celebrate SG60 this year with the theme "Building Our Singapore Together", let us remember that this is a call to action for all of us to contribute and play our part in writing the next chapter of the Singapore Story.
 - a. Your work as volunteer managers is ***transformational***.
 - i. You bridge willing hearts and urgent needs, individual compassion and collective impact.

- ii. Through your dedication, I am confident we can build a stronger, more resilient social service sector – one which embraces the spirit of volunteerism and exemplifies a caring and inclusive “We First” society.
- b. Together, with your continued commitment to excellence in volunteer management, we will create a Singapore where every person who wants to serve finds meaningful ways to contribute, and every person in need receives the support they deserve.
- c. Thank you and I wish you all a happy International Volunteer Managers Day!