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**OPENING ADDRESS BY MR ERIC CHUA
SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT AND
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND YOUTH
AT THE TRANSFORMATION SHOWCASE FOR NON-PROFITS
ON TUESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2022,
AT SUNTEC SINGAPORE CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE**

MOU Signatories

Panellists, Moderators, and Speakers

Friends and Partners from the Public, Private and People Sectors

1 Good morning. It is my pleasure to join all of you today at the inaugural Transformation Showcase for Non-Profits. We are gathered here with one common goal and that is to exchange ideas and explore new ways to improve our social service delivery. The aim is really to foster a culture of innovation and leveraging new technologies in the social service sector so we can achieve greater impact on the lives of those we serve.

2 At the Social Service Summit organised by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) in July, Minister Desmond Lee launched the refreshed Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts, or what we fondly call 4ST, and he spoke about the importance of transformation. The 4ST sets out the sector's commitment to build capabilities and capacities to remain relevant for the future and this endeavour requires efforts over the long haul. To sustain these efforts, we need to embrace innovation so we improve our collective productivity to deliver services that best meet the needs of service users.

Trends and importance of innovation in the sector

3 With rising costs of living and many other global disruptions happening today, individuals and families are faced with increasingly complex needs. These disruptions also impact people unevenly and some will need a helping hand to overcome these new challenges. The non-profit sector plays a more important role now than ever. In the past two years, we witnessed how the sector has adapted with agility. Many transformed their service delivery tapping on new technologies and leveraging innovative ideas to address new challenges. These include the shift to a hybrid service delivery model, or using chatbots to cope with increased call volume. This should continue.

4 To help our social service agencies (SSAs) in these transformation efforts to be strong, effective, and well placed to deliver quality programmes to our service users, NCSS launched the Organisational Health Framework for Social Services last year. We encourage SSAs to use this framework and the diagnostic assessment, to determine which capability areas you should invest in to achieve the biggest impact for your organization. You can then pick the most relevant capability scheme to tap on, from among the many that NCSS has in place, including Tech-and-GO! to increase technology adoption, the Volunteer Management Funding Scheme and Transformation Support Scheme, to facilitate the hiring of dedicated volunteer managers (VMs) and social service manpower respectively, and the People Practice Consultancy to enhance SSAs' human resource management practices.

5 I am happy to share that over 270 SSAs have made use of NCSS' digitalisation resources and reported productivity gains ranging between 10% and 30%, and at least 70% clients' satisfaction. NCSS also funded 50 VMs in 50 SSAs in the first year of implementation. These VMs helped to put in place proper attraction, engagement and retention practices for volunteers, which resulted in more than 90% increase in the number of regular volunteers and about 60% increase in outreach to service users. This demonstrates the investment in organisational capabilities enable us to extend more outreach and be able to better support our service users!

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6 The Government remains committed to strengthening the capabilities and capacities of our SSAs and charities to ensure that they are adequately resourced to enhance sustained support for individuals and families. Besides schemes and initiatives under the Community Capability Trust and the Charities Capability Fund, NCSS is working with the Agency for Integrated Care and SG Enable to set up a new CommCare and Social Service Robotics and Automation Cluster to make the adoption of such solutions easy and cost-effective for clients and caregivers. The cluster will collectively identify common user needs and solutions across the SSAs, explore demand aggregation opportunities to make implementation costs affordable, and work with stakeholders to remove or lower the barriers to adoption. It will also engage experienced public sector agencies, private sector solution providers, and partners with the right expertise to support the SSAs. I look forward to seeing the work of the cluster accelerate the use of robotics and automation for SSAs.

Benefits of innovation and 3P partnerships

7 To ensure that these efforts bring about sustained support for individuals and families, we need to harness the strengths of partners in the public, private and people (3P) sectors. This will allow us to learn how to remain agile and flexible in adapting our initiatives, plans, and programmes to better anticipate blind spots, and plug any gaps in knowledge and experience, than if we were embarking on this journey alone.

8 Such 3P partnerships have played an instrumental role in supporting the sector. Allow me to share an example – Mendix's 'Low-Code for Good' Hackathon gathered teams from across Asia Pacific to develop working applications to improve the service delivery of New Hope Community Services, a SSA that uplifts the lives of families and individuals it supports. This is indeed a cross-sector, cross-border initiative! There are many other partnerships and these seeds planted by the sector and our 3P partners have borne fruit. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all our 3P partners for your continued support to ensure that the sector can continue to develop person-centric solutions, and build capabilities and capacities to support those in need.

9 In the vein of 3P partnerships, today we will witness a significant milestone – forging partnerships with not one, but three esteemed parties. They are Memoranda of Understanding between the NCSS and Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP), and Singapore Polytechnic (SP) respectively. The MOU exemplify ways we can leverage the expertise of our 3P partners and signify NCSS' commitment in forging cross-sector collaborations to ensure that the social service sector is equipped to handle current and future needs.

10 I am excited to share that the MOUs will form an umbrella of support, spanning service, process, and data transformation. These include:

- a. NCSS will work with SIT's Community Leadership and Social Innovation Centre (CLASIC) to augment the IT capabilities of Social Service Agencies (SSAs) through end-to-end problem identification and solutioning. Together with the National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning (NACE@SIT), NCSS will also empower SSAs in developing lifelong workplace learning capabilities in the fast-paced, digital-first economy;
- b. SP will offer low-bono consultancy and training for NCSS' member SSAs to optimise process efficiency through digital transformation such as Robotic Process Automation as well as digital marketing; and
- c. NYP will provide process automation and data analytics consultancy to improve SSAs' service delivery.

Forging collaborations to strength support for individuals and families

11 So look forward to more resources and support in your transformation journey. But I know we already have many cross-sector collaborations where 3P partners bring their expertise to maximise the positive impact on our service users. You can find out more through the dialogues and insightful sharing that we have planned and I hope you will be inspired to start taking action today.

12 This call for greater collaborations is indeed timely as we rally all Singaporeans to contribute and collectively shape our nation's future with the Forward Singapore exercise. The Government firmly believes that we need to work together as one nation

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and leave no one behind. So to NCSS and the partners here today, I would like to commend you for leading the charge.

13 I urge the SSAs and charities in our midst to tap on the available resources and the strengths of our 3P partners to bolster your capability and capacity building efforts. Perhaps the conversation can even start today, right here at the Transformation Showcase.

14 As we forge a path ahead together, let us always be guided by our heart to best meet the needs of our service users. Dream limitlessly, innovate boldly, and collaborate meaningfully. Once again, thank you for joining me at the Transformation Showcase this morning and enjoy the rest of the programme.