

**WELCOME SPEECH BY MR GILBERT FAN,  
PRESIDENT OF THE SINGAPORE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS, AT THE  
SOCIAL WORKERS' DAY 2009, TUESDAY, 31 MARCH 2009,  
GRASSROOTS CLUB, SINGAPORE**

Dr Vivian Balakrishnan  
Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports

Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon  
Minister of State, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports

Associate Professor Maliki Osman  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National Development

Rear-Admiral (Ret) Kwek Siew Jin  
President of National Council of Social Service

Mrs Corinne Koh  
Chairman of Social Work Accreditation Board

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

We are celebrating our 3<sup>rd</sup> Social Workers' Day tonight. For the past two years, the Association witnessed a growing interest amongst social workers to be involved in professional matters and celebrate with much pride as passionate 'die-hard' social workers. Your turnout tonight, as in the past two years, has been strong testimony of your sense of identity as a social worker.

We have a long eventful history. Fortunately our history did not die through the years. It did not collapse as with some major institutions that had collapsed in today's difficult times. As

the Association has survived 38 years since its inception in 1971 as the Singapore Association of Social Workers, there must be some good reasons why the Association is still around today.

First and foremost, social workers prefer to have a professional body to represent them. Collective action is very much needed in international professional representation. Academic and employment institutions worldwide prefer academic and professional endorsements by national professional associations. Despite the co-existence of social work licensing schemes in the United States of America, the National Association of Social Workers in America continues to develop and set practice guidelines, specialty credentialing programmes, interest groups and practice-research initiatives for the profession. SASW aspires to be like some of these mega professional bodies and to do as much for the profession.

In the past decade, SASW has had made some major achievements and had conquered some new frontiers. The setting up of the Social Work Registration System in 2004 is a milestone for the Association. Its transformation into a national accreditation scheme in April – that is tomorrow - is yet another major achievement. More recently, the Association has broadened its professional development projects by being a committed and reliable community resource partner in community projects with key players like the Singapore International Foundation.

In the years ahead, SASW will focus on social work education and continuing professional education for social workers and social service practitioners. On behalf of SASW, I welcome all social work students to join us as Student Members, all social workers to renew ties with us as Ordinary Members, and I also welcome all social service practitioners to join us as Associate Members in the interim while working towards achieving social work qualifications.

As of today, the Association represents about 65% of social workers in the country. We hope to represent all social workers in our country. This is our commitment as your national professional body. To be successful in achieving this, we need your commitment and support. SASW and YOU strive on this mutually beneficial interpersonal relationship for the advancement of our profession.

I would like to thank our very talented social workers for exhibiting their works and putting up a very splendid performance for us tonight and for their generosity in donating their sales proceeds to the Association. They are Dr Linda Haverkamp for her paintings and taiji sword performance, Dr Ng Guat Tin for her paintings, Associate Professor Elena Lui for her book on “.05 Significantly Yours: A Guide to Reflection on Lifelong Learning”, Mr Vethiveloo Krishnasamy for his book on “Rehabilitation of Offenders in Singapore: Volumes 1 to 5”, Ms Joyce Tan Swee Yee for her creative writing, paintings and photography, Mrs Chen Swee Soo for her book on “Beauty from Ashes”, Dr Khoo Kim Choo for her books on children’s rhymes, Mr Ephraim Pan for entertaining us with his balloon sculpting before dinner, Mr Mohamad Farid Bin Jaaffar for his magic show and emceeing and Ms Sujeeta Menon for co-emceeing this event with Farid.

Last but not least, I thank the Guest-of-Honour Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports for gracing the occasion, Chairperson of the SWD 2009 Organising Committee, Ms Ho Gang Hiang and her Committee, volunteers and staff for successfully organizing the event and the staff of The Grassroots’ Club for their assistance. I understand we have worked them very hard. Finally, a big thank you to all our guests and members for your support and presence.