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**Welcome Address by Ms Long Chey May,  
President of Singapore Association of Social Workers  
at the Awards Presentation Ceremony for Outstanding Social Worker Award  
and Promising Social Worker Award 2020**

**23 November 2020**

1. President Madam Halimah Yacob
2. Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for Health
3. Assoc Prof Esther Goh, Chairperson, OSWA 2020 Selection Committee

Distinguished Guests,  
Colleagues, Friends and Fellow Social Workers

Good afternoon.

Today, we are gathered here, virtually, for the 21<sup>st</sup> year of the Outstanding Social Worker Award, and the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the Promising Social Worker Award ceremony. On behalf of the Association, let me first express our deepest appreciation to President Halimah Yacob for gracing us with your presence. Your continued support to the social work profession and to social workers in Singapore has given us much-needed strength to continue to serve the community. Thank you, Madam President.

**The Hardest Storm That Hit Us More than Most**

Today's ceremony is not just our first year holding it virtually, it also marks the coming through and rapid response of the sector against one of the hardest storms in history. The battle against the pandemic had put in place measures that we have not seen or anticipated – a Circuit Breaker, and months of social distancing.

While COVID-19 affected everyone, the more vulnerable members of our community bore the brunt of the impact – physically, financially, and psychologically. Unprecedented challenges rose, from the difficulty in providing services to beneficiaries, to how fund-raising events had



to be halted in view of social distancing safety measures. SASW would like to commend on ground-up initiatives such as 'Here With You' Helpline for migrant workers. Since April 2020, the Helpline has supported over 1,400 migrant workers.

Another ground up initiative I would like to highlight is the Holding Space 2020 which provides a safe therapeutic space for social workers to receive emotional support from the social work community, strengthening the resilience of the social work fraternity.

As an Association, SASW has been actively engaging our members, through various online platforms during this trying season such as "The More We Get Together" series where students gained valuable insights into the Social Work Sector and discussed on the new norms in social work practice.

SASW strives to realise our vision of a thought leader for the social work profession. The social work fraternity continually responds, participates and contribute to the discussions. An example of this is the Social Work Practice in Social Health Integration which is jointly set up by MOH and MSF to coordinate and operationalize the recommendations identified by social work leaders. The Workgroup, comprising medical and community social workers, has since started their deliberations and will submit their recommendations by June next year.

### **Sailing towards our Golden Jubilee**

2021 marks SASW's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, our Golden Jubilee. It will be a significant milestone for the Association in looking back at its achievements and forging forward as we continue to respond to advance professional standards in social work, continue to be the professional voice of social workers and to promote the Social Work profession.

The highlight of our 50th Anniversary would be piloting a training workshop on Supervision of Supervisory Practice, the first to be launched for Lead Social Workers in Singapore across sectors. The Workshop will encompass the management and education domains of social work supervision practice that goes beyond clinical supervision. We will unveil the details of the workshop next year.

The SASW Executive Committee and I are heartened by the continued support for social workers and recognising the work that we do.



I would like to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Social and Family Development for the sponsorship of the Professional and Leadership Development Training valued at \$30,000 and \$14,000 for each OSWA and PSWA winner, in addition to the \$1,000 cash award.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our long-standing sponsor, ExxonMobil Asia Pacific Pte Limited for their continuous support for each OSWA and PSWA winner with a personal development grant of \$10,000 and \$8,000 respectively.

### **Heroes in Extraordinary Times – the Winners**

My heartiest congratulations go to both the Outstanding and Promising Social Worker Award winners!

This year's winners have shown excellent work and influence in different settings, as well as the ability to raise the bar of social work through their foresight and creativity. Their work shines a guiding light for the industry, as their predecessors had. I look forward to working with them to nurture and inspire more committed, dedicated and tenacious professionals to stay on, and join this vibrant industry.

In closing, SASW encourages Social Workers to endeavour not only to practise and contribute as professionals but also to share your expertise and support in various aspects, such as serving on Ministerial level Boards and Workgroups in contributing to national policy-making and review and in collaboration with other professionals through interprofessional education and practice.

On this hopeful note, thank you and have an enjoyable afternoon ahead.