

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MRS ROSA DANIEL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL AT THE WECARE ARTS EXHIBITION LAUNCH AND
MOU SIGNING**

4 SEPTEMBER 2017, FESTIVE STAGE, OUR TAMPINES HUB

Minister Grace Fu

Ms Low Yen Ling, Chairman of Mayors' Committee and Mayor of South West District

Mayors Dr Mohamad Maliki, Dr Teo Ho Pin, Ms Denise Phua, and Mr Desmond Choo

Mr Desmond Tan, Chief Executive Director, People's Association

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the launch of the WeCare Arts Exhibition 2017, and MOU signing ceremony for the WeCare Arts Fund. This marks the renewal of a successful and collaborative partnership between the National Arts Council and the Community Development Councils of the People's Association.
2. In 2014, NAC observed that there was an increasing demand for arts programmes in the social service sector. Various social service organisations, or SSOs shared that the arts could help in engaging beneficiaries meaningfully. The arts has the capacity to bring about positive social outcomes through playing a significant role in building a caring and cohesive society. In response, NAC initiated the WeCare Arts Fund in partnership with PA in 2014. Since then, we have together seeded a diverse range of broad-based arts programmes, reaching out to over 170 centres or nearly 20% of the social sector in Singapore. This has enabled seniors in activity centres and nursing homes, persons with disabilities and youths at risk, to experience and enjoy the arts. Over the past 3 years, the Fund has reached out to more than 8000 beneficiaries through more than 300 programmes.

3. The arts connects and builds relationships between people, and complements the services offered in the social sector. For example, dance and music activities can help youths build confidence and resilience. Introducing isolated seniors in our community to the visual arts can add meaning and vibrancy to their daily lives. Earlier this year, 15 at-risk youths and youths with special needs from Equal-Ark Singapore took part in a series of dance workshops by Apsara Asia. The participants were able to learn a new skill in dance, and had opportunities to engage with each other, developing team work and a sense of empathy for each other through these dance sessions.
4. The Fund has supported some 90 artists across art-forms to engage with various communities. These artists play a crucial role in sharing their passion for the arts, inspiring the beneficiaries to develop new interests, learn new skills, and to enjoy creative self-expression in the arts. We see artists working alongside social service practitioners, with the common goal of enriching and engaging beneficiaries through the arts programmes offered.
5. In another example of how the Fund has enabled different segments of the community to come together, mosaic artist Lisan Chng worked together with seniors and staff from Bright Vision Hospital, as well as corporate and youth volunteers, to bring seniors together in co-creating mosaic artworks. Many of the seniors said they felt a great sense of accomplishment and fulfilment when the project was completed. We get to enjoy some of their finished works in the WeCare Arts Exhibition launched today.
6. The MOU today really ensures the Fund continues to support SSOs to integrate the arts into their programmes for beneficiaries, promoting meaningful engagement and creative self-expression through the arts. I would like to thank our partners, PA and the 5 CDCs, as we continue to work together to increase arts access and participation in the community. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the artists and seniors who have worked hard, and celebrate their achievements in creating the works of art on display today. Thank you.