

WELCOME SPEECH BY MR ZAINUDIN NORDIN, MAYOR, CENTRAL SINGAPORE DISTRICT AND CHAIRMAN OF ONEPEOPLE.SG AT THE ORANGE RIBBON CELEBRATIONS ON 23 JULY 2010 AT RIVER PROMENADE

[Pls check against delivery]

Good Evening

Guest of Honour, Mr Teo Chee Hean, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence

Fellow Mayors

Parliamentary Colleagues

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to this year's Orange Ribbon Celebrations.

2 The Orange Ribbon Celebrations is a ground up movement spearheaded by OnePeople, in partnership with the 5 CDCs, Self-Help Groups and community partners, to rally our community to promote values of racial and religious harmony. This year's theme "*Friendship Without Borders*" calls upon each one of us to nurture the treasured friendships that we have between our diverse communities, be it our local ethnic or

religious communities, new citizens, or foreigners who have just joined our family.

3 Friendships that are forged without the borders of race and religion bring communities closer and strengthen a nation's social fabric. It is a communal bond, underpinned by values such as meritocracy, respect, and trust.

4 The key community activity for this year's Orange Ribbon Celebrations was an online photo blurb competition called "What's Your Story?" to encourage our people to share personal stories of friendships between our diverse cultures. I am heartened to say that we received double the number of expected entries, with more than 600 entries in just over a month from people of all backgrounds. From our children to working professionals, each of the 600 stories had one common thread: friendship knows no boundaries, as long as hearts and minds connect.

5 In July, more than 80 community events were held islandwide in conjunction with the Orange Ribbon Celebrations providing opportunities

for both locals, and our new citizens to learn more about each other, appreciate our cultural diversity and make new friends.

6 We completed the Orange Ribbon Pledge Drive started last year, providing an opportunity for our community to express personal commitments in upholding racial and religious harmony and the Olympic values of “Excellence, Respect and Friendship”. A total of 201, 000 pledges were garnered from the community and we achieved this target this year, just in time to coincide with SYOG 2010 Celebrations.

7 The Orange Ribbon movement has grown steadily since its birth in 2006 as a District level programme in Central Singapore. Strong support from community partners including schools, religious groups and grassroots organisations, and corporate entities have gone a long way towards championing our cause. I am pleased to say through such concerted efforts, we were able to distribute 100,000 Orange Ribbons islandwide, and attract more than 30,000 people to Orange Ribbon events.

8 The Orange Ribbon that we all wear today symbolises the values of racial and religious harmony that we hold dear to our hearts. It

symbolises the respect, understanding and friendship that we have for our friends from different cultures. Today, we have lined up for you an exciting day of multi-cultural exchange. I urge all of you to also carry the message of friendship back with you, to bring on board more people to support the Orange Ribbon movement.

9 Singapore has always been a cosmopolitan society. We welcome people from all over the world to bring their talents, and contribute to the vibrancy of our nation. This openness to diversity has allowed people of different backgrounds to excel due to their innate ability. A happy result of this is that our community landscape is a culturally rich and interesting one. This is indeed a unique strength of ours that we should showcase to everyone, especially when we welcome the athletes and guests from all over the world to the Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games this August.

10 I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Community Development Councils, People's Association, Self-Help Groups, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, The Arts House and Asian Civilisations Museum for joining hands with OnePeople to make this event possible. I would also like to thank the

Singapore Totalisator Board, National Integration Council, STOMP, Public Utilities Board, Gardenia, Dairy Farm Singapore, Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee, and our official drink sponsor 100 plus for their generous donations and support.

11 I wish you an enjoyable evening ahead. Thank You.