

**SPEECH FOR MR TEE TUA BA, SINGAPORE RED CROSS CHAIRMAN,  
WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY &  
CHAMPION DONOR RECOGNITION CEREMONY  
SINGAPORE SPORTS HUB, 10 JUNE 2017**

Minister Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health

Dr Mimi Choong, CEO, Health Sciences Authority

Distinguished blood donors, bloodmobile organisers

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning, and welcome to the 14<sup>th</sup> World Blood Donor Day and Champion Blood Donor Ceremony. I am humbled to be in the company of so many lifesavers.

On behalf of Singapore Red Cross and our partner-in-service, the Health Sciences Authority, I would like to thank you for attending today's Ceremony. We congratulate all the champion blood donors on achieving your donation milestones. You can be rightly proud of your achievement.

I would also like to thank Minister Gan for gracing World Blood Donor Day as our Guest-of-Honour. Minister Gan was formerly a Red Cross Youth cadet, and he remains an avid blood donation advocate. Minister, we are honoured by your presence today.

World Blood Donor Day is commemorated around the world to pay tribute to the millions of unsung heroes who save lives. Not only have you, the blood donors, given the gift of life to numerous patients who need transfusion, you are also the

beacon of hope and strength for their grateful families. Your blood has given life to many and your blood donation is your legacy.

Today, we will recognise the contributions of 1,257 champion blood donors, 13 of whom have made over 200 blood donations each! Family and friends, please join me in giving our blood donors and lifesavers a round of applause.

I would also like to recognise our community bloodmobile organisers for your support. You are a critical partner on the blood programme. Thank you for working tirelessly to organise blood drives, promote blood donation, and recruit and retain blood donors. Last year, with your support, we organised 465 community blood drives, collecting over 33,600 units of blood. We honour you for mobilising the community to save lives. Congratulations!

### **Forging Community Partnerships**

Many other community partners have supported the National Blood Programme by boosting our outreach in various different ways. Last year, Nanyang Polytechnic and Changi General Hospital boosted our outreach efforts through publicity and skilled volunteer support. Others, such as SAF's combat service and support command, or CSSCOM, and Tzu Chi Foundation, have dedicated their time and resources to rally donors and promote the blood banks at Westgate and Woodlands.

Besides bloodmobile organisers, we are also reaching out to other organisations to partner us in the Blood Programme. At an institutional level, we are working with the Ministry of Education and MINDEF. The aim of these partnerships is to

reach out to our youth. We want to impress on our students and service personnel the importance of blood donation through a variety of educational and engagement platforms.

I am also happy to share that, in January this year, in conjunction with its 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Red Cross Youth pledged to rally 6,500 people to give blood in 2017. It is an excellent example of our nation's youth doing their part to ensure blood supply sustainability. These partnerships and initiatives are key to increasing our pool of youth donors - something we urgently wish to do.

Many donors have taken their lifesaving passion a step further. Mr Tea Wee Teck from Aon Singapore, for example, rallied his colleagues and business contacts from the insurance and reinsurance sectors to give blood at our community blood drives. In addition, he championed the blood cause in his workplace and mobilised his colleagues to support the National Blood Programme through skilled volunteerism. They are now working on a data-analysis project, on a pro-bono basis, with the Singapore Red Cross. Mr Tea follows in the footsteps of many dedicated blood donors who chose to promote blood donation in the communities where they live, work, and socialise.

### **Building a sustainable supply of safe blood**

These community partnerships underpin our ongoing efforts to ensure a safe and sustainable blood supply in Singapore. Having a robust and sustainable blood supply ensures that we as a nation are well-placed to manage not only day-to-day medical emergencies, but also large-scale civil emergencies and security threats. Besides sustaining the lives of patients with medical conditions

daily, blood donation also strengthens the bonds between members of the family and the community.

Blood transcends all races and religions. Hence, the selfless act of blood donation reminds us that we are indeed “one united people”. Such unity will help see us through any challenge ahead. We have also established blood banks in the community with the hope that the people in Singapore will embrace blood banks as community spaces, where people gather to do good, save lives and safeguard current and future generations. In many ways, this is Total Defence in action - securing our future and building community resilience for our people, by our people.

There is still much to do to inculcate in all of us the habit of blood donation and the belief that blood donation should be an integral part of our nation’s psyche and way of life. Our success will depend on whether we can continue to inspire new blood donors to step forward to give blood, and encourage existing donors to continue giving blood regularly.

I urge all of you here today to share your journey and achievements with your family, friends, neighbours, and colleagues. Even as we celebrate your donation milestones today, let us work together to inspire the next generation of champion donors to embark on this fulfilling journey.

## **Conclusion**

Finally, I would like to thank our event partners; Singapore Sports Hub and Hewlett Packard for your tremendous support.

In closing, on behalf of Singapore Red Cross and Health Sciences Authority, I would like to thank you, our champion blood donors and bloodmobile organisers, for your presence here today, and for your enduring effort in supporting the blood programme and helping to build community resilience. I wish you a meaningful and enjoyable day here at the Sports Hub.

Happy World Blood Donor Day!