

WELCOME REMARKS
BY DR CHOONG MAY LING, MIMI, CEO, HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
AT THE OPENING OF THE BLOODBANK@WESTGATE TOWER,
23 JUNE 2015

Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance

Ms Grace Fu, Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Second Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Advisor to Yuhua Grassroots Organisations

Dr Lam Pin Min, Minister of State, Ministry of Health

Professor Satku, Chairman, HSA

Mr Tee Tua Ba, Chairman, Singapore Red Cross

Mr Benjamin William, Secretary General, Singapore Red Cross

Guests and colleagues

1 A very good morning to everyone, and welcome to the opening of the Bloodbank@Westgate Tower.

2 To make blood donation more convenient and accessible to the public, we are setting up satellite blood banks in regional centres close to where our blood donors live, work or study. Through this decentralisation strategy, we hope to encourage many more blood donors to establish a long and sustained relationship with these satellite blood banks, so that our patients in Singapore will continue to have access to a safe and adequate blood supply.

3 We started on this strategy in 2011 with our first satellite blood bank in the heartlands – Bloodbank@Woodlands. This was followed by the Bloodbank@Dhoby Ghaut in 2012. Both satellite blood banks are making important contributions to the national blood supply. They have also given us useful insights on blood donor behaviour and preferences. We took these insights into consideration when building Bloodbank@Westgate Tower, our third such satellite blood bank. The key insights are the importance of locating our blood banks within

easy access to public transport facilities, creating a warm and welcoming ambience within the blood bank, and cultivating strong ties with the local communities.

4 We are therefore very excited to locate our new blood bank within the vibrant Jurong Lake District to serve existing and potential donors within the Jurong area, as well as the nearby estates. Our records show that more than 18,000 current and past blood donors live in the West, and we hope to encourage them to use Bloodbank@Westgate Tower. We also hope that the blood bank's proximity to the Jurong East MRT station and bus interchange will attract many more new donors to come forward to give the gift of life.

5 The success of the blood bank requires strong buy-in from the local community. From the moment we selected Westgate Tower to host the new blood bank, our national blood donor recruiter, the Singapore Red Cross, has been working hard to engage the local grassroots organisations. We are heartened that these early community engagement efforts have helped to create buzz for the new blood bank. Just nine days ago, the Singapore Red Cross and Yuhua SMC launched Pledge5000, a community initiative to get residents and those working in Yuhua to donate at least 5,000 units of blood by the end of this year. Our partners, Yuhua SMC, Jurong GRC, Taman Jurong CC, Jurong Town Council, The Federation of Merchants' Association, and Singapore and Capital Development Enterprise Pte Ltd, have helped us to publicise the opening of this blood bank, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their strong support.

6 Today's opening is only possible with the strong support of the Singapore Red Cross, which is the 'face' of blood donation in the recruitment of blood donors. The Singapore Red Cross's passionate team of recruiters and volunteers are the real champions of blood donation. They work tirelessly to engage schools, companies and grassroots organisations, and promote the message of the importance of blood donation. With our strategic partnership with the Singapore Red Cross, we are confident that we can continue to meet the rising demand of a larger and ageing population for a safe and sufficient blood supply in Singapore.

7 I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to a group of retired staff from the former Singapore Blood Transfusion Service, who are here with us today. Your hard work and contributions over the years have helped to lay a strong foundation for the successful National Blood Programme we have today. On behalf of all of us, thank you very much.

8 As part of our launch this morning, we have, for the first time, put up an exhibition at the Jurong East MRT station, to enable the public to find out more about the National Blood Programme. The exhibition will run until 5th July, and we urge everyone here to encourage your colleagues, friends and family to view the exhibits. We hope many more people who live, work and study in the vicinity will be inspired to come and use the Bloodbank@Westgate Tower.

9 Finally, thank you all for joining us today at the Opening of the Bloodbank@Westgate Tower. It now gives me great pleasure to invite the Deputy Prime Minister on stage to address us.