

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR DAVID CHUA, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL SINGAPORE, AT THE CHINA-SINGAPORE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FORUM (CSYDF) OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CHINA-SINGAPORE YOUTH LEADER CAMPUS (CSYLC) ON 12 APRIL 2024 AT 9.35AM, AT PARKROYAL ON BEACH ROAD**

Good morning to everyone who is present here for the 2nd China-Singapore Youth Leaders Campus (CSYLC), and I would like to welcome our friends visiting us from China. To Mr Ye Cong, Vice President of the All-China Youth Federation, and Deputy Director of the China Ship Scientific Research Centre, and his delegation. To the CSYLC alumni, and to all the youth delegates, especially to those who have made the effort to come to Singapore, welcome everyone.

I have some thoughts for us to consider as we kick off this campus and exchange. In a world that is confronted with multi-dimensional threats of fractures and geopolitical uncertainty, enduring partnerships are precious and act as a beacon of hope for us.

So how do we sustain enduring partnerships? There are four pillars. The first is relationships or also known as “guan xi”, people-to-people ties. It is important that we maintain youth cooperation between both countries to promote stronger people-to-people ties, and to foster a much closer understanding between youth leaders, who also hold positions of influence in their communities and networks. You are those youth leaders.

The second pillar is steadfast commitment. The CSYLC programme is only possible due to the efforts of the organising teams, and the commitment from both the National Youth Council (NYC) and the All-China Youth Federation (ACYF) to nurture the next generation of leaders. Another example of a steadfast commitment is that this year marks the 30th anniversary of the Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP) Project between China and Singapore. It is 30 years of faithful relationship and commitment. SIP was established in 1994, and it was the first government-to-government project between our two nations. This does not only strengthen economic collaboration, but it strengthens ties and drive new ideas for our countries.

The third pillar is creating value for each other. Singapore is China’s ninth largest trading partner and China is Singapore’s third largest trading partner. At our recent Singapore-China Economic Partnership conference aimed at bolstering bilateral trade and investment between the two nations, we signed three MOUs, or memorandums of understanding, to enhance business relationships, strengthen intellectual property, and to support business mediation and arbitration. These are examples of creating and sustaining values for each other. Even on the tourism front, we’ve agreed to implement a visa free entry policy for all our citizens, allowing stays of up to 30 days this year. This encourages the fostering of ties and bonds between citizens of both countries and creation of value.

China has also been a steadfast partner for creating value in youth cooperation and development and through the COVID years. The All-China Youth Federation and NYC have been faithfully organising bilateral exchanges, even when we could not physically

meet. This is because we believe in creating relevance and value for the youths in both countries. The creation of social capital is important and as we emerge from COVID, President Xi Jinping announced that China will hold the World Youth Development Forum (WYDF) and to jointly initiate the Action Plan for Global Youth Development. And since then, China has organised the WYDF for the past two years, for which we have also participated actively and formed good value. So, the creation of good value for each other is the third pillar in enduring partnership.

Finally, the fourth and most important pillar is to have good and strong leadership. Our leaders from both countries have always led from the front, developing foreign policy, and building enduring relationships and partnerships. Mr Lee Kuan Yew once had a speech on foreign policy, to which he said, "Ultimately, it is the leaders who decide on the changes in directions of foreign policy at face-to-face meetings and interactions over long hours, to understand and sense each other's thinking, leanings, and key positions on issues. So, they do influence and settle the direction of foreign policy, the fabric of the relationship, and the texture of the partnerships". You here, are all leaders in your own right and future leaders in your communities of your towns, cities, and countries.

Hence, the role of young leaders like you in shaping the future should not be overstated. But this leadership is also not just about doing your best individually, it's about building on collective strengths through collaboration, and the willingness to embrace diversity. So, as we go on this programme, I hope you will learn from each other and be inspired by those around you. The Singapore-China partnership is an enduring partnership and what you're doing here together is a steadfast continuation of this collaboration and partnership.

So, I challenge you, as leaders, to strengthen this partnership and push its boundaries, to challenge our own norms and assumptions and make this partnership even more impactful. We are counting on your leadership, and I have the confidence that you will rise to the occasion and courage.

I wish you much learning and many new friendships in the CSYLC programme. Thank you.