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**SPEECH BY MR TEO SER LUCK, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY  
SECRETARY FOR MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT, YOUTH AND SPORTS AND MINISTRY OF  
TRANSPORT AND CHAIRMAN FOR NATIONAL YOUTH  
COUNCIL AND YEP ADVISORY PANEL AT THE SIGNING OF  
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN  
INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM ASSOCIATION AND  
NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY, 13 MAY 2009,  
7.00 PM AT THE \*SCAPE YOUTH CENTRE**

Dr Chan Yew Wing

Chairman of International Volunteerism Association

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Evening.

It is my pleasure to be here today to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the International Volunteerism Association (IVA) and the National Youth Council (NYC).

2           The Youth Expedition Project (YEP) under NYC was set up in 2000 to develop young Singaporeans as caring neighbours and global citizens through meaningful and sustainable projects in ASEAN, China and India. Since then, more than 15,000 youth have gone for over 700 overseas service-learning projects under YEP and it has definitely played a key role in encouraging young Singaporeans to be active volunteers, both locally and overseas.

3           At a broader level, the International Volunteerism (IV) scene in Singapore has grown and matured significantly over the last ten years. There is a sharp rise in the number of Singaporeans venturing overseas to volunteer their time to support a worthy cause. Accompanying this trend is also the steady growth of the number of organisations involved in IV work. The Singapore Red Cross Society and Mercy Relief have come to be established names specialized in the area of disaster relief work; the Singapore International Foundation (SIF) through its Singapore Volunteer Overseas (SVO) Programme, has facilitated the participation of many Singapore volunteers in capacity-building projects overseas; Habitat for Humanity, Singapore set up in 2002, has sent many volunteers to complete numerous home building projects in the region. And the Ministry of Education, through the introduction of the Internationalization Fund to schools in 2008, is also actively encouraging students, some as young as primary school students, to go overseas and be exposed to the different culture and be engaged in community work

4           It is heartening to see such growth in the IV sector, as involvement in international volunteerism strengthens one's relationships and interaction with local and overseas partners and this helps to enhance one's understanding and appreciation of the different environments and his role as an active local and global citizen.

5           In 2008, the IV sector celebrated the launch of the International Volunteerism Association (IVA). Started by a group of passionate and experienced IV volunteers, the mission of the Association is to drive and strengthen good IV practices, by providing a platform for IV practitioners in Singapore to share with one another their resources, information and

experiences. The launch of IVA was a key milestone that was in line with the direction for YEP set by NYC - to develop an active and highly-connected youth IV sector to nurture our Singaporean youth.

6           The signing of this MOU between IVA and NYC today hence formalizes the partnership between the two organizations. IVA will partner with NYC to build up the capability of the youth IV sector under YEP, through a differentiated approach to capacity-build organizations active in YEP expeditions to better cater to different organizations at different levels of experience. NYC will also engage the expertise of IVA to source and establish strategic partnerships for YEP partners in ASEAN, China and India and to identify possible volunteering opportunities with overseas host partners for the YEP alumni. E-resource materials will also be developed by IVA for YEP partners.

7           I am delighted to be here to witness this ceremony that marks the beginning of this strategic partnership between IVA and NYC. Building on both organisations' interest and strengths to jointly develop the youth IV sector under YEP, I am confident this partnership will bring about exciting synergy and development for the youth IV sector in the months ahead.

8           Thank you.

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