SPEECH BY DR. LAM PIN MIN, MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF HEALTH, AT THE 'BEACON OF LIGHT' CHARITY CONCERT HOSTED BY THE SINGAPORE ASSOCIATION OF THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED (SAVH) AT THE KALLANG THEATRE ON SATURDAY, 16 JANUARY 2016, 7.30PM

Mr Leow Chee Tsai, Chairman of the Beacon of Light Charity Concert and his Organising Committee

Mr Phillip Lee, President of the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH)

Executive Committee Members of SAVH

Distinguished Donors and Supporters

Ladies and Gentlemen

- 1. Good evening. I am very happy to join you today at the 'Beacon of Light' Charity Concert. Today's concert presents a special performance by Charity King, Qin Huai and veteran artistes to raise funds for the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH). I attended the concert in 2013 and am looking forward to this evening's performance.
- 2. Since 1951, SAVH's mission has been to help the visually handicapped to help themselves. The Association

provides a comprehensive suite of programmes in vision rehabilitation, accessibility and mobility training, and skills development programmes for more than 3,500 individuals. These programmes help the blind and visually challenged clients to overcome adversity and acquire new skills to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

- 3. SAVH's vision rehabilitation programme is supported by NCSS, Community Chest and Tote Board Social Service Fund. As of 2014/2015, the programme has benefitted close to 2,500 clients with low vision, of which approximately 8% were new referrals. SAVH has also been working closely with our public acute hospitals with more than 50% of SAVH's low vision clients coming from these institutions.
- 4. The Home Care Programme is an extension of SAVH's flagship vision rehabilitation programme. It provides comprehensive occupational therapy, case management and befriending services for SAVH clients within the comforts of their homes. The programme involves working with clients and family members to accept their condition and imparts skills to cope with the activities of daily living. To overcome their fear of travelling alone, clients are equipped with essential cane

techniques and orientation and mobility skills to navigate their surroundings for safe and independent travel. Most importantly, the programme helps clients to regain confidence to step out and re-engage the community.

- 5. Skills Development is another SAVH outfit that equips visually handicapped clients with vital vocational skills such as in telemarketing and computer literacy to prepare them for independent living and open employment. In FY2014/2015, 58 clients have managed to find jobs through this essential programme. I would like to take the opportunity to thank employers who have collaborated with SAVH as part of its skills development programmes and encourage all to continue to support the Association in offering training courses and job opportunities for SAVH clients.
- 6. The successes of SAVH's programmes would not be possible without the support of donors, volunteers and family members of loved ones with vision impairment. Despite the many challenges people with vision impairment face, adversities can be turned into opportunities.

Last month, we joined the rest of Singapore in celebrating the achievements of our paralympians at the 8th ASEAN

Paralympic Games. We are proud of our visually impaired athletes who represented Singapore in many of the events including Chess, Football 5-a-side, Goalball, Swimming and Tenpin Bowling. Despite the physical challenges and short training period for some of our paralympians, the team put up a strong fight against formidable opponents from across ASEAN. Their inspirational stories, tenacity and resilience spur us to persevere in helping the visually impaired achieve their full potential and to make Singapore an inclusive society for all.

- 7. Let me now say a few words in Mandarin.
- 8. 很高兴能参与新加坡视障人士协会(SAVH)主办的光明使者送温暖慈善音乐会。新加坡视障人士协会自1951年起,为了使视障人士生活得更美好,作出了重大的贡献。

9. 新加坡的视障人士在不同领域里,都取得很好的表现。例如,我国的视障选手在上个月举行的第8届亚细安残疾人士运动会上为国争光,在下棋、五人足球、游泳和保龄球等项目

取得辉煌的成绩。我们大家都感到骄傲。新加坡的视障人士不怕困难,勇敢追求梦想,从而取得不凡的成就。这是令人感动,令人鼓舞的。

- 10. 在此,我要感谢音乐会的工作人员、秦淮先生和所有参与演出的艺人。同时,我也要恭贺SAVH的努力成果。在我们庆祝2016新年之际,我也借此鼓励并呼吁所有新加坡人继续支持协会具有意义的工作。
- 11. In closing, let me take the opportunity to congratulate the Organising Committee and volunteers on organising this evening's Charity Concert. Today's proceeds will go towards supporting SAVH's mission to continue to be a "Beacon of Light" to its clients. I encourage all to join me in support of this meaningful cause. With that, I wish you all an enjoyable evening.
- 12. Thank you.