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**OPENING ADDRESS BY MR TAN PUAY KERN
CO-CHAIRMAN, CHRISTMAS LIGHT-UP 2011 SWITCH-ON
CEREMONY ORGANISING COMMITTEE
CHRISTMAS LIGHT-UP 2011 SWITCH-ON CEREMONY
SATURDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2011, 7PM
NGEE ANN CITY CIVIC PLAZA**

**Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Singapore and
Patron-in-Chief of the National Council of Social Service, and
Mrs Tony Tan Keng Yam**

**Mr Chan Chun Sing, Acting Minister for Community
Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS)**

**RADM (RET) Kwek Siew Jin, President of the National Council
of Social Service**

Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman, Community Chest

Mr Chew Choon Seng, Chairman, Singapore Tourism Board

**Dr Tsutomu Kanai, Chairman Emeritus, Hitachi, Ltd. & Mrs
Kanai**

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1 Good evening and thank you for joining us at this year's Christmas Light-up Switch-On Ceremony. We are privileged to have with us this evening, President and Mrs Tony Tan Keng Yam as our Guests-of-Honour for the first time at this ceremony. President and Mrs Tan, thank you for gracing this event.

Acknowledging corporate donors and sponsors

2 This is the 24th year that Community Chest is partnering the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) to organise the Christmas Light-Up Switch-On Ceremony, and we are deeply appreciative of STB's partnership and for providing this platform to raise funds for the less fortunate in our society.

3 Leading the way in this effort is our main sponsor, The Hitachi Group of Companies, who have been making annual contributions to Community Chest for the past 21 years. This year, they have yet again generously donated another \$200,000, bringing their total donations

over the past two decades to \$3.5 million. We are deeply grateful to Hitachi for its steadfast support for Community Chest all these years.

4 We would also like to thank LianBee-Jeco Pte Ltd and the Evangel Family Church for donating \$70,000 and about \$30,000 respectively. Their valued contributions will go a long way towards helping the needy in our community.

5 We would also like to acknowledge the Orchard Road Business Association, who is sponsoring the venue for this year's Light-Up, and the Marina Bay Business Association for contributing to our fund-raising efforts through this Switch-On Ceremony. Donation boxes have been placed in Christmas shuttle buses that ply the Marina Bay area, to raise funds during this festive season. Specially designed umbrellas with artist Gail Pantin's panoramic sketch of Marina Bay will also be sold to raise funds for Community Chest.

6 Each association also organised their own activities to complement the overall fund-raising effort. For instance, Celebrate Christmas in Singapore, organiser of carolling performances and activities along Orchard Road and at the Marina Bay area during Christmas, has partnered the Orchard Road Business Association to raise funds in a very unique way. Celebrate Christmas in Singapore provided 5,000 battery-operated candles for distribution to the public, and the Orchard Road Business Association has pledged to donate \$1 to Community Chest for each candle distributed. I am certain that when these 5,000 candles are lit after the lights along Orchard Road are switched on later, it will be a stunning sight. This gesture of solidarity is a fitting symbol of our combined support to assist the less fortunate in our society. The collective effort of all these wonderful endeavours will surely bring much cheer to our beneficiaries.

Christmas ChariTrees @ Marina Bay

7 As part of the fund-raising efforts this year, many corporate donors have also stepped forward to adopt the Christmas ChariTrees at Marina Bay. This innovative fund-raising platform was kindly offered by the Urban Redevelopment Authority, and it has been very well-received. Some of these organisations have also rallied their staff to help decorate these trees, while others have roped in their beneficiaries to help as well. We are grateful to all our sponsors, and their efforts will certainly help spread some festive cheer. The lights on these trees will be lit up as well, so do drop by the area and enjoy the view of these beautifully decorated trees, which represent an even more beautiful and deeper significance.

Improving the lives of the less fortunate

8 The donations from the Christmas Light-Up project and the sponsoring of the Christmas ChariTrees at Marina Bay will go towards the funding of 158 critical social service programmes that will benefit about 300,000 people. Community Chest needs to raise

\$55.7 million this year, and every dollar raised goes towards supporting our beneficiaries. They include children with special needs, youth-at-risk, people with disabilities, the lonely and frail elderly, and families in need. Community Chest has been helping them for 28 years and will continue to help the needy with your generous support.

9 This evening, I am glad that nine youths from the Students Care Service (Yishun SYNC Programme), who call themselves ‘Street Prodigy’, have joined us this evening. They are an award-winning dance group and are amongst the many that have benefited from your generous donations through Community Chest. They had the opportunity to develop their talents and have blossomed and bloomed as a result of the social service programmes supported by Community Chest.

10 Thus, it is apt that the theme for this year’s Christmas Light-Up is “Christmas Blooms in Singapore”. So, while you are rushing about

with your Christmas shopping, spare a thought for the less fortunate. Christmas is a time for caring and sharing, and we can all play a part in spreading a little festive cheer to someone who may need some help to thrive and flourish.

11 On behalf of the beneficiaries of Community Chest, I thank you for making this truly a season of cheer and wish you all an enjoyable evening. Merry Christmas!