

## **CLOSING REMARKS BY SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MS SIM ANN, AT CLOSING DIALOGUE FOR COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL ON NEIGHBOURHOOD NOISE ON 19 NOVEMBER 2022, 11.30AM, AT MND AUDITORIUM**

1 Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us today to understand and discuss the recommendations from the Community Advisory Panel on Neighbourhood Noise.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CAP'S EFFORTS**

2 Neighbourhood noise may strike us as a mundane issue, but for some Singaporeans, it can affect their everyday quality of life. And, if we go by the volume of feedback in recent years on neighbourhood noise, this issue now matters to more and more Singaporeans. The trend can be explained partly by changes in living and working habits, especially ever since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. But explaining the problem doesn't make it any easier to solve. We seek to empower communities and citizens to take a more proactive stake in building a more endearing and liveable home for all. The Panel members have embarked on a thorough review of the issue, and sought to understand the different perspectives of the public. The report presented by the Panel today reflects the views and suggestions from the ground and sets out clear recommendations, both upstream and downstream, to help address the issue of neighbourhood noise.

### **The Three "Balances"**

3 Community noise is a subjective issue. Different people have different reactions and tolerance levels to sounds in the community. Yet, as a densely populated city, we need to consider personal liberties and communal peace and quiet. One of the very difficult challenges to deal with, is that residents own their homes, and do have the freedom to conduct activities within their private spaces. However, what they do within their homes, especially during inconvenient times or inconsiderate ways, may create negative impact on their immediate neighbours. What do we think is the right balance between personal liberties and the community's right to peace and quiet?

- We need to strike a good balance between using informal means of neighbour dispute resolution vs using hard levers such as the law and government enforcement. On the one hand, using laws and enforcement may effectively eradicate certain problems – at least for a while. But during this process, we may lose something intangible and change the texture of society – going away from our ideals of building a more gracious,

cohesive, considerate community where we can discuss problems with one another and to give and take.

4 It was not an easy task to distil the numerous views, suggestions and personal stories into a set of recommendations. I would therefore like to commend the good work of the Community Advisory Panel. The Panel has sought to reinforce the importance of each one of us being considerate, and recommended clear norms on how we can help to reduce noises in the community. The Panel has also put forth recommendations pertaining on how the Government can come in more decisively to address issues of community noise, where efforts at the community level fail.

5 While the Panel was mindful that most of the people who stepped forward to give feedback are those who are affected by neighbourhood noise and want to see change, members were also acutely aware in making the recommendations that they should consider potential implications for everyone – whether those who generate noise or those who experience the noise. There will inevitably be some reactions to the recommendations from those who did not take part in the survey or discussions, and we look forward to hearing these too.

6 The Government will carefully review the CAP's recommendations, and provide updates when ready. It is precisely because the Government wants to work with the community to address this issue that the Community Advisory Panel was convened to make the first step. We do need them to make the first step because some norms need to be articulated.

7 While we are not presenting solutions today but because we are keen to make a change, we have to actually plan out the steps. Without the norms that the Community Advisory Panel has now articulated and put forth, and without that process where we allow this to go out to the public and then hear back from more people, it would be hard for more steps to happen.

8 We will also continue to work with CAP to encourage more gracious and considerate community living. Let us keep our neighbours in mind when going about our daily activities, and actively work together to build a better living environment for all to enjoy.

## **CONCLUSION**

9 I would also like to thank the many citizens who have come forward to contribute their views. I am very heartened to see active citizenry in action, and we hope to continue to partner the community to co-create solutions and build a more harmonious Singapore going forward.

10 Thank you, and I wish you all a restful weekend ahead with lots of peace and quiet.