

**OPENING REMARKS BY MS SIM ANN, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ON  
NEIGHBOURHOOD NOISE ON 13 AUG 2022, 9.30AM – 12.30PM,  
AT MND FUNCTION ROOM**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. A very good morning to all. I hope everyone had a good break over the National Day public holiday. Let me begin by thanking everyone for taking time to join us on a Saturday morning, and to share your thoughts on the issue of neighbourhood noise.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD NOISE AND FORMATION OF COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL**

2. The Municipal Services Office had earlier shared about neighbourhood noise, and the work of the Community Advisory Panel on Neighbourhood Noise, or CAP for short. Allow me to elaborate on why we are doing this.

3. In a dense living environment like Singapore, experiencing some form of noise in our neighbourhood is not unusual in our daily living. There was an increase in the number of feedback over the last 2 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic as many of us were working from home. The trend is expected to continue as the work environment has now evolved into a hybrid work arrangement for many of us.

4. Noise is complex and subjective. Across the municipal issues managed by the Government, neighbourhood noise is one of the most challenging issues that my colleagues in MSO and relevant agencies face on the ground. We have employed a wide range of efforts to address this long-standing issue. These include working with local grassroots leaders to respond to cases, running public education campaigns to promote neighbourly behaviour, and piloting new interventions and studies. However, in some cases, noise issue continues to affect the well-being of residents.

5. This is why we have convened the CAP as part of our integrated response to manage the issue of neighbourhood noise. These norms developed by the CAP should reflect a shared understanding within our community on what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable noises in the community, and the good neighbourly behaviour we should adopt to reduce noise disturbances on our neighbours. They will move us towards a more gracious, considerate and harmonious community.

6. It is crucial for CAP to consult widely and seek inputs from the community. They are currently conducting a series of public engagements, with the support of MSO and

MCCY. To date, we have more than 1,300 responses on our online survey, while 280 people have shared their views at our focus group discussions. The responses gathered has reflected the diversity in public perspectives when it comes to noises in their neighborhood.

## **NOISES FROM SOCIAL AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES- LIVELY OR NOISY?**

7. Today's discussion is unique from other sessions as we are focusing on noises from social and family activities, such as social gatherings, celebrations among family and friends, playtime for our children, among others.

8. We hope to gain a better understanding from you on your perspectives of our societal norms on how we bond with our families and friends or manage our children. Such norms might have changed over time. In the past, it may be a common sight for children to gather outside their home and play with one another, and we may regard it as a form of kampung spirit. Big families may also gather for celebrations during festive periods, for example, playing mahjong till wee hours. But, in today's context, neighbours who prefer quiet time may be less tolerable of such activities as they create noise disturbance which can affect people's physical and mental health.

9. We want to explore this balance between having a lively and vibrant environment, and having a peaceful refuge for rest. We want to understand how you, who may be a parent or neighbour experiencing such situations, feel and respond. We hope to hear your views on this later.

10. To ensure a diversity of views, we have also invited our community partners from Singapore Scouts Association and Centre for Fathering to join us today. I would like to thank them for supporting us in addressing this issue.

## **FORWARD SINGAPORE EXERCISE**

11. The work of the Panel is important and closely aligned with our Forward Singapore exercise. The exercise, launched by DPM Lawrence Wong, looks to partner Singaporeans to **build a more endearing home** for all of us.

12. There are six main pillars under Forward Singapore – Empower, Equip, Care, Build, Steward, and Unite. Under the "Build" pillar, we look to transform our living environment to build a more liveable home for all. The CAP contributes to this by developing a set of community norms in tackling neighbourhood noise, which helps to foster shared ownership and responsibility across society for our home and living environment.

## **WHAT'S NEXT**

13. I encourage everyone to share openly and freely later. Your inputs will provide useful insights to our Panel members, who have the challenging task of developing these norms. I hope through our extensive engagements, we will hear the thoughts of residents with different views and backgrounds. Together, we build a more gracious and harmonious living environment for everyone in Singapore.

14. Thank you once again for volunteering your time. I wish you a fruitful discussion ahead.