

**OPENING REMARKS BY PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY WOMEN'S WING CHAIRWOMAN  
SIM ANN AT INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024 – WELLNESS IN ACTION EVENT**

Organising Chair Ms Nadia Samdin,

Parliamentary colleagues,

Branch Chairs,

Retired MP Yu-Foo Yee Shoon,

Volunteers, activists, sisters from NTUC, partners and friends,

Good Morning,

Each International Women's Day is important to the PAP Women's Wing.

We come together to reflect, celebrate and honour the aspirations and achievements of our Singaporean women.

We recognise their invaluable contributions to our society, economy, and our shared journey towards progress.

***Physical and Mental Well-being***

Since its inception, the PAP Women's Wing has been dedicated to activism and advocacy on issues close to women's hearts.

This includes:

- recommending measures to protect women from workplace discrimination and harassment
- establishing robust support networks for women to re-enter the workforce
- promoting equal sharing of caregiving responsibilities
- organising fundraising activities to help beneficiaries for women and children.

Since last year, I have been thinking about – and discussing with potential partners – on focusing on women's health and well-being

Why? I would like to offer three reasons.

**First, women are the pillars of many families.** A healthy and strong woman can be critical not just in looking after her own nuclear family, but possibly the generation above and the generation that comes after.

Singapore women have done well over the decades. Our girls have done well in education And women's participation in the resident labour force has grown from 57.7% in 2012 to 63.4% in 2022. But that is not to say we do not have challenges, especially health-related challenges.

Helping women become more knowledgeable and empowered about their health, and supporting them in defining and achieving their health goals, is also helping their families and loved ones.

Second, it is a fact that **women tend to live longer.**

- Life expectancy in Singapore, at 83 years, is among the highest in the world. For our men it is 80.7 years, while for our women it is 85.2 years. The global average is around 73 years
- Many of the issues of concern in an aged or super-aged Singapore are going to be closely related with the lives and health of women.

Third, despite the progress that Singapore women have made over the years, my colleagues and I still notice often, a self-effacing ethos among women, especially older women

- They save their attention and resources for their loved ones, sometimes putting aside their own needs, including health needs
- We believe there is merit in encouraging women to give due attention to self-care and their own health and well-being – even if we are not doing it for ourselves, let's do it so that we can continue to be there for our family and loved ones

Hence the PAP Women's Wing will be adopting women's health and well-being as the theme for our activities this year.

Glad that Organising Chair Nadia has gamely taken on board this theme and designed a fresh approach for this year's IWD commemoration – **Wellness in Action.**

## ***Women need to prioritise our health and well-being***

One of the most important things that the organising team has done in preparation for today is to tackle the third reason why we think women's health is important.

Our recent survey with NTUC U Women & Family (NTUC U WAF) on women in leadership paints a startling picture: 8 in 10 Singaporean women do not prioritise self-care or dedicate time to activities that nurture their own well-being. In addition, only a mere 21.8% of female respondents consider their well-being a pivotal factor in their life choices.

This has to change.

We need to help women become more knowledgeable and empowered about their health and supporting them in defining and achieving their health goals.

We need to change mindsets – self-care is not selfish. We are not asking women to care less about others. But to recognise our health and well-being as key enablers for us to care for and support those we love.

## ***Importance Of Partners***

We cannot do this on our own – we need the expertise, resources and networks brought by partners.

Kudos to the Organising Team for bringing on board many partners who are similarly dedicated to the cause of women's health:

1. Dr Jason Lim - OGSS
2. Dr Ng Seow Ling - Eu Yan Sang
3. Mr Alastair Hunt & Ms Felicia Koh - The Whole Health Practice
4. Ms Alexis Lion - Attuned Therapy
5. Ms Chan Shi Han - Movemental
6. Ms Devi Vijayan - Faith Abundance Light
7. Ms Law Shuli - Aroma Compass
8. Ms Nicole Tow - Barre Instructor
9. Ms Nur Aisyah - Lait Aisyah
10. Ms Rasidah Caudal - Piloxing
11. Ms Rebecca Eu - Mei's Own
12. Ms Siti Nurulhuda - Activ.Co

13. Ms Wendy Ho - Mary Chia Group

14. Ms Yvonne Low - Band of Sisters

In closing, as we mark this International Women's Day, let us reaffirm the PAP Women's Wing commitment to the well-being and empowerment of our Singaporean women.

Self-care is not selfish - wellness is not an afterthought.

We are not just advocating for change; we are making change too.

Together with our partners and community, we will continue to champion the causes that matter most to our women, ensuring every woman has the means to not just survive, but to thrive.

By investing in women, we are investing in the backbone of our community, our economy, and our future.