

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day
Creating the Future – Women in Society, Economy & Government

Welcome Address for IWD Celebration Dinner

Ms Mary Liew

1st Vice President, Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (SCWO)

Our Patron and Guest-of-Honour, Mrs S. R. Nathan, Minister Mrs Lim Hwee Hua, Minister of State, Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, Member of Parliament, Mrs Josephine Teo, distinguished Ambassadors and High Commissioners, Directors, member organisations of SCWO, supporters, colleagues and friends, Ladies and gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to everyone here this evening as we celebrate 100 years of International Women's Day.

I am extremely grateful to each and every one of you who made it here this evening, despite it being a weekday and a working day.

We are indeed very fortunate to have amongst us today the First Lady of Singapore, **Mrs S. R. Nathan**, who is also our Patron and guest-of-honour for the evening. We also have with us today **His Excellency Doug Chester**, the Australian High Commissioner to Singapore, **Her Excellency Satu Mattila**, Ambassador from the Embassy of Finland, **Her Excellency Janne Julsrud**, Ambassador from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, **Her Excellency Fauzia Sana**, High Commissioner from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, **Her Excellency Jayathri Samarakone**, High Commissioner from the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and **Mrs Michal Sarig-**

Kaduri, Deputy Chief of Mission from the Embassy of Israel. I thank all our distinguished guests for gracing this occasion with their presence.

To honour and venerate the Global Centenary of International Women's Day, SCWO organised several events and activities. The first was the inaugural SCWO Debating Tournament held last weekend, which was organized together with the Singapore Management University Debating Society. SCWO also initiated the production of an archival video, called "We are 100", which charts the progress of the women of Singapore over the last 100 years. Then, on 19th March, SCWO will be inviting 100 women and girls to partake in the painting of a mural in front of the SCWO Centre on Waterloo Street. Of course, tonight's Celebration Dinner is also a major part of the celebrations, which is aimed at bringing together all our member organisations and supporters on this special occasion!

None of these events would have been possible without the help and encouragement of many of you present here this evening. I stand before you today to thank you sincerely for your support and for the belief and commitment that you have shown and continue to show to SCWO.

I would first like to thank the **Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports** for their encouragement and continuous support to SCWO. We treasure this relationship and look forward to it growing from strength to strength in the years to come!

Next, I would like to thank the **Australian High Commission** for their support, generous sponsorship of the trophy and arrangement of prize for

the Best Speaker of the Debating Tournament. My appreciation is extended to the **Singapore Management University**, especially the SMU Debating Society, for all their support in the organisation of the Tournament.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to our generous corporate sponsors, namely the **Celeste Holding Pte Ltd**, **Satsuma Ship Management Pte Ltd**, **PACC Ship Managers Pte Ltd**, **Westpac Institutional Bank**, **Interlocal Exim** and **Her World**, which is the official magazine for the evening as well as the official media partner for Women's Register. I also thank all our other corporate supporters featured in our programme booklet, who have contributed to this year's celebrations.

I must give special mention to all of SCWO's **member organisations** as well, for your cooperation and unwavering support and for being a part of SCWO.

Last, but most definitely not the least, I would like to acknowledge the sheer commitment and dedication demonstrated by the SCWO **staff and volunteers** in ensuring the success of each and every event organized this year!

Over the last 100 years, women in Singapore have progressed by leaps and bounds. However, our work does not end here and we must continue to work towards the promotion of the status of women in all the spheres of public life. Therefore, on the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, SCWO's wish for the future is for greater equality in the participation and continued advancement of women in all fields. And this wish by SCWO

is reflected in the theme we have chosen for this year: ***Creating the Future***
– ***Women in Society, Economy and Government.***

Once again, I thank you all for making tonight all the more special with your presence. We have an exciting programme planned for this evening, which I am sure you will enjoy tremendously!

And now, I would like to invite on stage Mrs Laura Hwang, President of the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations, to give us her Opening Address.