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**WELCOME ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT HALIMAH YACOB AT
THE TEAM SINGAPORE RECEPTION ON WEDNESDAY, 28
FEBRUARY 2018, 730PM, THE ISTANA**

Ms Grace Fu
Minister for Culture, Community and Youth

Mr Tan Chuan-Jin
Speaker of Parliament and President, Singapore National Olympic Council

Members of Special Olympics Singapore, the Singapore National Olympic Council and
the Singapore National Paralympic Council

Team Singapore athletes, Care-givers, Coaches and Officials

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening

I am delighted to host this reception for our Major Games' Team Singapore contingents. Thank you for flying the Singapore flag high at the Special Olympics World Winter Games, SEA Games and ASEAN Para Games last year, as well as the recent Winter Olympics. My heartiest congratulations to every one of you for your outstanding performances!

At the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria last March, our athletes brought back an impressive haul of three Gold, five Silver and three Bronze medals. Sporting history was made at the SEA Games as it was Team Singapore's most successful away Games. At the ASEAN Para Games, our Team Singapore athletes achieved a record number of medals for an away Games. We also had our first ever Winter Olympian^[1] at the recently concluded Winter Olympics in PyeongChang.

These are incredible achievements, and they were made possible because of your hard work, resilience and dedication. You are an inspiration to other young aspiring athletes; a role model for your peers; and a source of national pride for all Singaporeans.

^[1] Cheyenne Goh competed in the 1,500m Short Track Speed Skating event. She finished 5th out of 6 competitors in her Heat.

We must also not forget the “team behind the team”. These are the people who have worked tirelessly to support our athletes so that they can perform at their best at the Games. Behind every successful athlete are the coaches, the National Sports Associations, the sport scientists and medical personnel from the Singapore Sports Institute, as well as officials from SNOC, SNPC, Special Olympics Singapore and Sport Singapore. All of you, as well as families and friends who have supported our athletes along their sporting journey, have been critical to Team Singapore’s success. We are all very grateful for your contributions.

Sport has the power to bring people together. I was told contingents of Singaporean supporters travelled to Kuala Lumpur last year to support our athletes at the SEA Games and ASEAN Para Games. There was a strong sense of national pride as Singaporeans cheered on our athletes. Beyond the medal achievements, I am glad that Team Singapore has also inspired the Singapore spirit.

I would also like to take the opportunity this evening, to recognise the contributions made by corporate partners and fellow Singaporeans. The One Team Singapore Fund was launched last October for businesses and individuals to support our Team Singapore athletes through donations. I am happy to note that many have stepped forth to support our athletes both financially and in spirit, as they continue on their quest to achieve sporting excellence.

2018 will be another busy year for Team Singapore. Many of you are already in the thick of preparations for the upcoming Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and Asian Para Games. On behalf of all Singaporeans, I would like to wish you success in these Games. We will be cheering for you together as One Team Singapore.

Thank you.

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