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SPEECH BY MR ZAINUDIN NORDIN, MAYOR, CENTRAL SINGAPORE DISTRICT AND CHAIRMAN, ONEPEOPLE.SG AT THE CAMPTEEN: YOUTH RACIAL HARMONY AMBASSADORS PORGRAMME FINALE ON 30 NOVEMBER 2010 AT ONEPEOPLE.SG

My fellow Board Members

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Students

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Finale of CampTeen, OnePeople's flagship Youth Racial Harmony Ambassadors Programme. First, let me congratulate all of you for successfully completing the camp. I hope you had a fun and enriching learning experience over the past four days.

2 This is the 17th year running we are organising CampTeen, for young people of all races to interact, bond and forge friendships. I am pleased to say that, over the last four years, the programme has evolved as a leadership programme, providing opportunities for youths like you to champion our cause, as racial harmony ambassadors.

3 I hope you had enough time over the last few days to reflect upon this year's slogan for Camp Teen. The theme- "What Moves You?" offers us plenty to reflect upon. As a point of reflection, I would like to share with you examples of leaders who were so inspired by their cause; they changed the lives of millions, for the better.

4 Martin Luther King moved to fight racism when racial segregation in America deprived blacks of their basic civil rights. He went on to make one of the greatest speeches in history, called, "I have a dream", and his determination to see justice eventually led to the civil rights movement in America. Mahatma Gandhi moved to seek freedom from British colonial masters, when he saw Indians being treated as second class citizens in their own land. His sheer perseverance and unquenchable will made him lead a movement that brought independence to India in the most unseen fashion, through non-violence. Nelson Mandela was moved to end apartheid when he saw blacks being treated as inferior to whites in a country which belonged equally to both. He championed the freedom of millions and became the first elected President of South Africa.

5 All these three great men were moved by the cause to end racism, discrimination and bring equality to the human race. They created history in achieving what they set out to do, but none of them had an easy path. They either faced, death threats were thrown in prison, or ill treated in one way or another. They faced endless obstacles, but moved by the cause to uphold human dignity; they were relentless in their mission. Nothing could deter them in their beliefs. Every step which pushed them back just made them leap further. This was largely due to the firm belief in their values.

6 It is our values that shape our character and are often the driving force of our actions. Values such as respect, love and care for another human being are essentially what move us to be a compassionate, caring, and harmonious society. These are values that we need to continue to build in our country. So come what may, these values will shine through and ensure our social fabric is kept intact.

7 In Singapore, we have experienced peace and stability for many years. However, in a multicultural society like ours, there are bound to be differences, but it is important that we should never allow these differences to spill over.

8 We have witnessed from reports over the media, on errant youths who have gone on the new media stating negative remarks about other ethnic groups. We have also seen young bloggers who have been arrested for scathing racist comments. These people do not realize how their words can hurt people's feelings deeply. They use the anonymity of the new media to commit such baseless acts. We must stamp out such acts of hate and never cause such actions to go undeterred.

9 So when you come across incidents when some of your friends are ridiculed, because of their race or some of your schoolmates feel prejudiced against another religion, be it in real life or via new media, make a stand, correct their actions or tell your teachers so that necessary steps can be taken to resolve issues. As Racial Harmony ambassadors you need to lead the way for others to emulate. You must be the first to move when you see acts of racism.

10 Youths are growing up in a constantly connected world where going digital is part of everyday life. While we have seen one or two cases, of people using the new media to create discord, there are great opportunities for youth engagement in the social media for a positive cause.

11 Let me give you an interesting example. In Germany, there is a world-wide children's radio network called 'Radijojo', which is an initiative to empower children to use radio and internet as tools for global learning and cultural exchange. It is essentially a web portal created by children for children, to discuss topics such as children's rights, environment, cultural exchange, peace, education and other lifestyle topics. Supported by a Non-profit organization, this radio network brings children in contact with each other from all over the world. It has even won the International Children's Day of Broadcasting regional award from UNICEF.

12 I am pleased that we also made opportunities for our CampTeen participants to share their learning journey via social media. For the first time, internet connections were made available on-site, so that students can log in and make live updates at the campsite through photos and messages via the CampTeen 2010 Facebook group. I understand the site has been buzzing with messages and uploads since the very first day of the camp.

13 As our younger generation, you play a very important role in preserving racial harmony ties in our country as we take the next lap. Racial Harmony is a journey we all take together, and everyone needs to

do their part. OnePeople.sg gives you an excellent platform for you to put forward your contributions.

14 We encourage you to participate in our programmes; volunteer or even come up with your own ideas in promoting racial harmony. We have seen some good projects led by none other than youths like yourselves who graduated from CampTeen in previous years. For instance, past participants have spearheaded an annual music competition called 'Rafusicul' to foster positive interaction amongst youths of different races through music. This year, the event was held at Jurong Point, which attracted more than 500 members of the public. Some of them are here as your co-facilitators today. Racial Harmony can be exciting, and fun, just like this camp that you had. Do take the opportunity to connect with us and I would like to see all of you come on board in championing future Camp Teen initiatives.

15 I am told you have been given the opportunity to offer your contributions in various community service projects as part of your Camp Teen learning journey. I hope you will step up to the challenge to lead these community projects as our ambassadors and continue your journey beyond this Camp.

16 This Finale may mark the end of your residential camp, but it is a beginning of a new found journey. I urge you to cherish the wonderful friendships. Keep in touch with your new friends and make it a point to build this journey forward.

17 I would like to take this opportunity to thank National Parks Board, Public Utilities Board, Housing Development Board, Sentosa and Shan You Counselling Centre for their support. I would also like to thank all our Youth Wing members, facilitators, and participating schools and organisations for taking time to be with us and contributing to yet another successful CampTeen.

18 I wish you a pleasant afternoon ahead.

Thank you.