

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MRS YU-FOO YEE SHOON, MINISTER OF STATE
FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, YOUTH AND SPORTS, AT THE 14th
WOMEN LEADERS NETWORK MEETING WELCOME DINNER ON 3 AUGUST
2009 AT STAMFORD BALLROOM AT 7.30 PM**

Ministers, Heads of Delegations

Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends

Welcome

A very warm welcome to the 14th Women Leaders Network Meeting Welcome Dinner. I am happy to see so many familiar faces in the audience. To those of you who are new to the WLN meeting and to Singapore, a warm welcome to the meeting and to Singapore.

2 This is the first of many opportunities for all of us to come together to exchange ideas and to meet new regional partners. It is also the first of many events that will provide you with a taste of Singapore hospitality and Singaporean's great passion for food.

Growth of WLN and its influence

3 The Women Leaders Network has grown in size and influence since its first meeting in 1996. To date, more than 4,000 women have participated in the meetings and events linked to the WLN. We have , over the years, done well in influencing economic change in the region.

4 WLN's growth, and continued importance, is a clear reminder that our economies cannot realise their full potential without the full participation of men and women.

Thematic Exhibition

5 Singapore has attempted to trace the WLN journey and its work. We have captured the contributions women have made in our region in a special exhibition outside this ballroom.

6 There are six pavilions in the exhibition covering:

- The 21 APEC Economies;
- The Journey of APEC WLN;
- The Recommendations of WLN Meetings in the last 13 years;
- Women's Achievements in Singapore;
- Women's Social Enterprises in Singapore; and
- Women Organisations in Singapore.

7 The exhibition is our modest effort to celebrate WLN as a common platform for us to contribute to women's development and contributions.

Contributions of the 14th WLN meeting to women in the region

8 I hope the 14th WLN meeting will be yet another platform for us women to exchange ideas and best practices. I also hope that together we can surf the waves of change and surface stronger in the recovery of our economies. I also hope you take this opportunity to network. We have chosen the theme, 'Women and Sustainable Development', in line with this hope.

Conclusion

9 The next few days promise to be engaging and interesting. We have planned a comprehensive line-up of events focusing on various issues relating to

women and the economy. I hope we will benefit from these events, and the networking opportunities. I wish you all a fruitful and engaging meeting ahead. Thank you.