

**SPEECH BY MR LAWRENCE WONG, ACTING MINISTER FOR CULTURE,
COMMUNITY AND YOUTH AT THE ORANGE RIBBON RUN/WALK ON SATURDAY,
6 JULY 2013 5:30PM AT MARINA BAY SANDS EVENT PLAZA**

Mr Zainudin Nordin, Chairman, OnePeople.sg

Chairmen, Presidents and Chief Executives of our five Self-Help Groups

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to join you for this evening's Orange Ribbon Run and Walk. I am encouraged to see so many of you gathered here in support of a worthy cause. Our self-help groups, community partners, and youth volunteers have done an excellent job of showcasing and celebrating our unity in diversity. And I'm also glad to see the Football Association of Singapore and S-League footballers here, out in full force. With so many people taking a stand against prejudice, I believe we can make a difference.

2 The racial and religious harmony that we enjoy today is something that all of us have worked hard to achieve. It bears repeating that harmony is not necessarily the natural state of things – history is peppered with lessons of ethnic conflict all over the world. So we must never take for granted the bonds that have been forged between our different communities over the past decades.

3 While we have come a long way since then, as a society, we should still aspire towards higher ideals. True harmony is not just about tolerance and co-existence; it celebrates diversity, and is based on mutual respect, understanding and trust. By participating in this “*Race against Racism*,” you are standing up for these values. We know that racism continues to exist in our society, especially in subtle forms - prejudiced views or unfair insinuations. When we come across it, we must make a stand and say that it has no place in Singapore; be it in real life or online, at work or among friends.

4 My Ministry is always on the lookout for better ways to bring us closer to this vision. I know there are many creative minds here, especially among the youth, who may have innovative and interesting ideas to promote harmony and mutual understanding. Earlier this year, my Ministry launched the Harmony Fund to support such initiatives, and I would encourage you to apply to the fund for support to bring your ideas to fruition.

5 Today’s event marks the release of the Orange Ribbon Music Video called, “Voice of Harmony”. This music video was specially commissioned by OnePeople.sg to express the values that we stand for. As we walk, I hope that we can take this opportunity to reflect on these values, foster new friendships, and be one step closer towards our vision of one united people, regardless of race, language or religion in Singapore.