

GOING FORWARD

1. The completion of this report marks the end of the Committee's deliberation and the beginning of the next phase of efforts for and with PWDs. The Committee hopes to see the establishment of the proposed office on disability. With this in place, the Committee looks forward to the drawing up of a national strategy in the next 1-2 years that would help us to realise our vision for PWDs. We urge that the perennial problem of lack of data be resolutely addressed, and that the disability prevalence rate will be determined within the next 5 years.

2. The Committee looks forward to a significant improvement in the framework, system and quality of early intervention, education and employment. These are the core developmental areas that must be addressed if PWDs are to be fully integrated into society. We hope to see over the next 5 years, a holistic system where children with special needs are properly assessed and emplaced in the education system. There would be a strong transition management system to take the child from pre-school to school to work successfully. We believe it is feasible to establish at least one centre of excellence within the next few years.

3. In employment, the Committee hopes to see strong commitment from government agencies, employers and VWOs to secure the jobs needed for PWDs in the next 5 years. We believe that there is a sufficient number of supportive employers to set up the Employers' Network soon with SNEF as the secretariat. We also hope that the three training initiatives cited in our masterplan will be implemented within the next 2-3 years. These are in food manufacturing, IT training and vocational training at NTUC Skills Development Institute. We also estimate that the disability-specific vocational assessment and job placement programmes could be ready within the next 2 years.

4. The care of PWDs, especially those with more severe disabilities or challenging behaviour, is complex and onerous. We hope that the Disability Caregiver Centre will be established fairly soon to support families in their caregiving role. Institutionalisation should always be the last resort. However, as an ageing society, we will have more caregivers who are elderly and may be in need of care themselves. We hope to see more care options for PWDs and more places in residential homes over the next 5 years for those who need them.

5. It is important for PWDs to be able to participate fully in the life of the community. We wait in anticipation for a fully barrier free environment. We hope that public education on disability awareness and acceptance of PWDs will be enhanced into a year long campaign.

6. The Committee believes that we can become an inclusive society. We fully endorse the "Many Helping Hands" approach. We encourage more philanthropy for the disability cause. The government, community, NCSS, VWOs, the family and the PWDs themselves – we must each do our part to fulfil our vision of an embracing and inclusive society.