

## **Welcome Remarks by Professor Jean Yeung at the Population Association of Singapore 2023 Annual Meeting**

**Theme: Building Singapore's Population Towards a Better Future**

**Minister Indranee Rajah**, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Finance and National Development,

**Mr Ho Kwon Ping**, S R Nathan Fellow, Founder & Executive Chairman of Banyan Tree Holdings, Laguna Resorts and Hotels,

**Dr Reiko Hayashi**, President of the Asian Population Association, Deputy Director-General of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (IPSS), Japan,

**Associate Professor Kelvin Low**, Head of NUS Dept of Sociology & Anthropology,

distinguished guests, colleagues, and friends,

Good morning to you all!

A very warm welcome to the inaugural conference of the Population Association of Singapore jointly organized by the NUS Center for Family and Population Research (CFPR) and the Population Association of Singapore (PAS). What a great joy to see so many of you here participating in this meaningful conference in which we come together to examine pertinent issues related to population dynamics and their implications. Special gratitude to our Guest of Honor, Minister Indranee Rajah, and the two keynote speakers Mr. Ho Kong Ping and Dr. Reiko Hayashi for gracing our event to help us mark this important milestone. To participants from 11 countries outside of Singapore, we thank you for coming and wish you an enjoyable experience and fond memories of Singapore and NUS.

The Population Association of Singapore (PAS) is a newly founded non-profit, scientific, professional organization officially registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs in March 2021. PAS provides a national platform for all to share knowledge, and partner in research, about population issues in Singapore and Asia to find solutions to challenges related to population dynamics. It has been a concept and a dream in the making for many years and we are excited that we finally have a critical mass to make PAS a reality now so that we can make contributions to Singapore more efficiently.

PAS's growing membership includes a multidisciplinary group - demographers, sociologists, economists, public policy & public health experts, students, members of the government, and community leaders. They are from all universities and various organizations across the nation. The themes that are close to our hearts include the **causes and consequences of population changes, the changing family structure and intergenerational relations, aging and health, fertility, marriage, children and youth development, migration, human capital, population and environment, and policy impact.**

Asia accounts for about 60% of the world's population and includes the 3 most populous populations in the world. What happens here critically affects the socio-economic and geopolitical development in the region and far beyond. Currently, developing a sustainable population is a top national priority for many Asian countries including Singapore.

In the past six to seven decades, the human population has experienced the most dramatic changes in human history, adding 30-50 years to our life span, having one-fifth the number of children, and a large number of adults never forming a family. The focus of population policies has transformed from family planning to pro-natal policies and migration and enhancing human capital development are major population strategies these days in many countries. These changes happened most rapidly in Asia - within a generation in some countries. Currently, several Asian countries are experiencing a population decline, not because of high death rates but as a result of our choices of lifestyles and the many institutional and personal constraints we face. These choices have afforded us much enjoyment but also brought us many threats. I believe countries have much to learn from one another about the successes and challenges related to population changes. PAS provides a platform for us to share our knowledge and seek solutions together.

This conference includes research on Singapore, other Southeast, East, and South Asian countries, and beyond. We look forward to hearing the 100 presentations over these 2 days about how countries' experiences and ideas for solutions. Minister Rajah will share her visions for Singapore's population, Dr. Reiko will analyze Japan's experiences, and Mr. Ho will ask tough questions as he always does to help guide our field. We will also have a panel discussing the employment resiliency of older adults and another on community-based solutions for healthy/successful aging.

I cannot thank enough for the hard work of the staff of PAS and CFPR, especially Ms. Joyous Tan for masterfully managing this conference, the Co-Directors of the CFPR – A/P Vincent Chua and Puk Teerawichitchainan, the program committee of this conference led by A/P Feng Qiushi and Dr. MaryAnn Tsao, the Tsao Foundation for hosting PAS, our sponsors – the Tourism Board, OUE, ISEAS Publishing, and other anonymous sponsors, many volunteers for helping with logistics, serving as chairs and discussants in the sessions and all the presenters for sharing your insights. Without your support, this conference is simply impossible.

NUS CFPR is instrumental in the inception of PAS with many of the long-time CFPR core researchers, myself included, being the main drivers and founding members of PAS. Our objectives are closely aligned. We look forward to having many more productive collaborations in the future.

I wish everyone a very stimulating engagement in the next two days. Thanks again to you all.

**Wei-Jun Jean Yeung, President of the Population Association of Singapore, NUS Provost-Chair Professor of Sociology & Anthropology Department and Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine**

**May 11, 2023**