

**SPEECH BY MS LOW YEN LING
CHAIRMAN OF MAYORS' COMMITTEE AND
MAYOR OF SOUTH WEST DISTRICT AT
THE LAUNCH OF CDC VOUCHERS SCHEME 2024 (JUNE)
ON TUESDAY, 25 JUNE 2024,
WEST COAST COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Mr Gan Kim Yong
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry

Mr Desmond Lee
Minister for National Development and Minister-in-charge of
Social Services Integration, Adviser to West Coast GRC GROs

Fellow Mayors:

Ms Denise Phua, Mayor of Central Singapore District,
Mr Desmond Choo, Mayor of North East District,
Mr Alex Yam, Mayor of North West District and
Mr Mohd Fahmi Aliman, Mayor of South East District;

Mr Yeo Hiang Meng, BBM,
President, Federation of Merchants' Associations Singapore,
Chairman & Managing Director, Heartland Enterprise Centre
Singapore;

Mr Jimmy Toh,
Chief Executive Director, People's Association

Partners and friends;

Welcome and Introduction

1. Welcome to the South West district for the launch of the
CDC Vouchers Scheme 2024 (June).

2. During this year's Budget, then Deputy Prime Minister and current PM and Finance Minister, Mr. Lawrence Wong, significantly enhanced the Government's Assurance Package to provide Singaporeans greater support to cope with cost-of-living pressures. An additional \$300 in CDC Vouchers would be given to all Singaporean households in June 2024 as part of the package.

Focus on alleviating daily expenses

3. The CDC Vouchers Scheme also reflects the CDCs' strong commitment to building caring communities. We seek to foster a spirit of giving and improve lives.

4. Through the scheme, we help Singaporean households lighten their daily expenses and boost the businesses of local hawkers and heartland merchants.

5. We will not let up in our efforts to widen the scheme's appeal and offerings. We want to onboard more hawkers and heartland merchants on the CDC Vouchers Scheme to help them attract more customers and grow their clientele base. With more shops on the scheme, Singaporeans will enjoy greater options to reduce expenses using their CDC vouchers.

Fifth tranche marks a milestone in the community's digital acceptance

6. Together with the \$500 CDC Vouchers disbursed earlier in January this year, this round of June 2024 CDC Vouchers brings the total amount each Singaporean household gets in 2024 to \$800. This is the highest amount given out in a single year.

7. This latest round of CDC Vouchers marks the fifth tranche of digital vouchers distributed in the past two and a half years—a small but significant milestone.

8. Our journey started in December 2021. We rolled out the inaugural tranche of \$100 CDC Vouchers for each Singaporean household to thank them for showing solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The vouchers were also intended to support heartland businesses struck by the crisis. Since then, we have seen a growing acceptance and use of digital payments in our community. Today, residents enjoy the convenience of paying using the CDC e-vouchers, and many of our 23,000 shopkeepers and hawkers in our heartlands scan QR codes readily. It was not easy initially, but we have come a long way.

9. Our people's willingness to embrace the digital transition is a testament to our strong spirit of resilience and courage. We understand that change can be challenging. At every distribution round, we made special efforts to assist those who needed more guidance. We also made the option for printed vouchers available in each of our 112 community clubs.

10. As a community, we sought to ensure that no segment of our society was left behind. We paid particular attention to supporting residents and merchants who were new to digital payments, did not own a smartphone, lived alone, or had mobility difficulties. GovTech also conducted multiple trials to ensure that the e-voucher scheme was easy for residents of different digital literacy levels.

11. We are grateful to the SG Digital Ambassadors, PA and volunteers who stepped forward to support residents, shopkeepers and hawkers with their time, education and outreach. These painstaking efforts have paid off. At each tranche, we saw more and more heartland merchants and residents embrace the digital transformation.

Collective effort by different communities

12. The CDC Vouchers Scheme has brought different communities together in various ways.

13. As mentioned earlier, we had many helping hands—from youth volunteers and digital ambassadors to grassroots leaders who patiently showed the ropes to those who were unfamiliar.

14. At the same time, family members, friends and neighbours also stepped up to help the less e-savvy claim the vouchers digitally. In addition, some heartland merchants and supermarkets formed special deals and ground-up efforts that encouraged residents to make good use of their vouchers. Furthermore, many participating merchants are doing their part by offering budget meals to help Singaporeans stretch the value of their vouchers and better manage their daily expenses.

15. For example, Mr John Oh, who runs a restaurant, Soi Thai Kitchen, at Jurong West, offers additional discounts to customers who pay with CDC vouchers. Over in Tampines, there is a small mini-mart called Riqmah Putraz Kindness Mart, which lets its customers “Pay-It-Forward” by using their CDC Vouchers to buy meals for senior and needy residents. I am greatly heartened by such efforts to help one another.

Conclusion

16. The CDC Vouchers Scheme would not have been possible without the hard work and collaboration of our industry and community partners and the support of hawkers, heartland merchants, volunteers and everyone who contributed.

17. In particular, we would like to thank the following organisations:

- a) The People’s Association
- b) The 9/various Government agencies that contributed.
They include:
 - i. The Ministry of Finance which has been funding the various tranches of CDC Vouchers since 2020;
 - ii. The three GovTech teams, (a) Open Government Products, (b) GovTech Singpass team, (c) GovTech GoWhere team and (d) GovTech Postman, have been

working closely to improve the user experience for our residents using the vouchers.

- iii. IMDA and its Singapore Digital Office (SDO) for supporting our digital transformation;
- iv. ESG and its network of Business Advisers at its SME Centres @ CDC who strengthened our outreach to merchants and
- v. Other government agencies such as the Singapore Land Authority, Ministry of Communications and Information, Singapore Police Force, Immigration and Checkpoint Authority and Department of Statistics which offered their knowledge and expertise;

18. We would also like to express our gratitude to:

- a) The Federation of Merchants' Associations Singapore (FMAS), Heartland Enterprise Centre Singapore and their 54 Merchant Associations also worked with us to organise training sessions for participants from Heartland Enterprise Centre Singapore and various merchant and hawker associations.

19. In addition, we want to thank

- a) Our Grassroots Advisers and Leaders for their invaluable ground support and
- b) Last but not least, our residents, hawkers, heartland merchants and 8 supermarkets across 415 outlets for their staunch support of the CDC Vouchers Scheme.

20. We celebrate the spirit of collaboration and cooperation that has made our community and nation more vibrant and resilient. The CDC Vouchers story exemplifies our collective strength and determination to overcome challenges and make our future shine brighter despite it all.

21. Thank you!