



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **YMCA to call for youth empowerment at 65<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly**

**Singapore, 25 July 2011** – At the 65<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly which will convene in New York today, the YMCA is accorded the rare honour of addressing the more than 200 Assembly members, Heads of States, Ministers and youth leaders from around the world at the opening ceremony of the High-Level Meeting on Youth.

Mr Romulo Dantas, a 29-year old Executive Secretary for Youth Empowerment at the World Alliance of YMCAs is appointed to deliver the speech. He will share the platform with Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of UN and Mr Joseph Deiss, former President of Switzerland and current President of the UN General Assembly.

Mr Dantas will recount his personal experience of being empowered as a youth to make a difference in the lives of others, how the YMCA empowered him to be a leader and an active citizen by facilitating his participation in civic education programmes, camps and volunteering for community service. Mr Dantas will also urge for urgent support and investment “in creative solutions to guarantee dignity to young people in the shape of Jobs, Health and Civic Engagement”.

Founded in London, England in 1844, the YMCA is one of the oldest and largest youth movements in the world. Today, YMCAs have been established in 125 countries with over 45 million members. As a youth movement, the mainstay of YMCA is to nurture youth who are the source of future leaders of society. In Singapore, the National YMCA movement comprises the YMCA of Singapore and the Metropolitan YMCA of Singapore. Youth development is one of the three key thrusts of the local YMCA movement’s work in the community. The other two being service to community and volunteer development. Mr Albert Ching, General Secretary of the YMCA of Singapore said, “In line with the universal YMCA ethos, the YMCA of Singapore has continually striven to develop, empower and groom youths into servant leaders who can rise to the occasion to drive impactful programmes that serve the needs of the community. To underline the

emphasis we place on youth development, we have a full fledged Youth Development Programmes department to oversee our various YMCA Youth Development programmes. Through these programmes, the youths are exposed to both local and international community service, social entrepreneurship and more.”

Since 2005, the YMCA of Singapore has facilitated the establishment of four youth service clubs in various tertiary institutions in Singapore. Namely University YMCA (Uni-Y) @ Singapore Management University (2005), Uni-Y @ National University of Singapore (2007), Uni-Y @ Nanyang Technological University (2009) and High School YMCA (2009). Despite their young age, Uni-Y and Hi-Y members have been given training and opportunities to organise and drive YMCA community service programmes locally and overseas as well as projects which they initiated on their own. Since 2002, YMCA of Singapore has also partnered Citi Singapore in organising the annual Citi-YMCA Youth For Causes programme. Targeted at youths, this programme mobilises youths to support social causes through social entrepreneurship projects, enabling them to raise funds, awareness and volunteers for charities of their choice. In addition to providing platforms for youths to serve the community, YMCA of Singapore also equips and empowers youths to serve others better through structured training programmes such as the YMCA-NUS Business School Volunteer Service Management Programme (VSMP) and the YMCA Leadership and Management Programme (LAMP).

The Metropolitan YMCA of Singapore engages youth through its V3 philosophy: inspiring “Vision and Voices for Volunteerism” among youths. The Association focuses on community engagement and empowerment of youths to achieve desired positive social changes. Currently working with a number of Junior Colleges and international schools, students are engaged through service-learning activities which include community projects such as MY Big Sweep (house cleaning and painting for the incapacitated), MY Manna (supply of provisions to needy families), MY MP3 (a 17-week tuition and mentoring programme for marginal primary school students). Ms Phyllis Tan, Executive Director & CEO of Metropolitan YMCA said, “It’s good to start young – getting youths to share their vision for a better world, and to discover ways of giving back freely to the community”.

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**About YMCA of Singapore**

YMCA of Singapore is a voluntary welfare organisation which seeks to serve all members of the community, regardless of race, language or religion through wholesome programmes which are based on Christian principles. YMCA organises 17 structured and sustained YMCA-Tan Chin Tuan Community Service Programmes to enrich the lives of the beneficiaries from 34 partnering voluntary welfare organisations and self help groups. The beneficiaries include the intellectually, mentally and physically challenged, out-of-school youth and youth-at-risk, abused and underprivileged children, the visually and hearing impaired, the elderly and the poor. Some of the other programmes include the YMCA-Lim Kim San Volunteers Programme, overseas community service programmes, rebuilding programmes for disaster-hit communities and YMCA Financial Assistance & Capability for Employment Scheme. YMCA was conferred the 2008 Outstanding Non-Profit Organisation Award by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre on 13 November 2008. The organisation also owns social enterprises, such as the YMCA International House, YMCA Child Development and Student Care Centres, YMCA School and YMCA Tertiary Education. [www.ymca.org.sg](http://www.ymca.org.sg)

**About Metropolitan YMCA Singapore**

The Metropolitan YMCA Singapore is a Christian non-profit social enterprise set up in 1946 which brings people together to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities through holistic programmes that develop body, mind and spirit, regardless of race, gender and creed.