

## Special Olympics signs three-year partnership with FWD to run programmes for people with intellectual disabilities in seven countries across Asia

**Singapore, 1 February 2018** –Special Olympics Asia Pacific and FWD Group today launched a three-year partnership to support young people with intellectual disabilities throughout Asia in Singapore, Hong Kong SAR, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, and Japan.

FWD’s investment will sponsor Special Olympics’ Unified Schools and Athlete Leadership programmes:

- The **Unified Schools** programme will engage 12,000 young people through workshops that address negative perceptions of people with intellectual disabilities. It will unify 90 schools and communities through 240 sports and non-sports events to celebrate inclusion and acceptance.
- The **Athlete Leadership** programme will mentor 300 athletes with intellectual disabilities to develop skills that help them at both work and in their daily lives. It will also train 200 mentors to support them. In addition, Special Olympics will establish partnerships with employment agencies to help athletes with intellectual disabilities learn leadership skills and find employment.

FWD Group Chief Executive Officer Huynh Thanh Phong said, “FWD wants to help lead positive change by encouraging social inclusion and advocating equal opportunities for people with disabilities. We would like to thank our partner Special Olympics for helping us bring to life our Community Care vision to empower people to live fulfilled lives across Asia. Together, we hope to increase awareness, encourage inclusion, and create a future with a difference for people with intellectual disabilities into the community.”

Dr John Dow Jr., Special Olympics Asia Pacific Chief of Regional & Program Operations, Acting President and Managing Director, said, “I am heartened and encouraged by our new partnership with FWD for their support for Unified Sports and our Athlete Leaders. When dealing with an issue like intellectual disability, the right partner will help turn the tide. With their strong regional presence, FWD is poised to make a difference to our athletes in many of our Programs and I am happy to welcome them to the Special Olympics family. We look forward to a long and productive relationship with FWD helping us build an inclusive society on behalf of our athletes and their families.”

Globally, 15% of the world lives with a disability<sup>1</sup>. Of these, more than 200 million<sup>2</sup> have an intellectual disability making them one of the world’s biggest disability groups and one of the most underserved populations. People with intellectual disability face enormous attitudinal, structural and logistical barriers to obtaining healthcare and getting a job. These compounding factors mean that many struggle with poverty and have significantly shorter lifespans than the general population.

These are the societal barriers that Special Olympics seeks to redress. While sport is the conduit, the goal of Special Olympics is to pave the way for their athletes to live up to their fullest potential after they step off the playing field. Now midway through their 5-year Global Strategic Plan and marking their 50-year anniversary worldwide, the movement has plans to aggressively expand their network of athlete leaders around the globe, increase the number of schools engaged in Unified Sports and to develop training modules that will help prepare athletes to join the workforce.

FWD’s community care programmes are part of FWD Group’s commitment to playing a part in the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and particularly addressing no. 10 on “Reduced Inequalities” and no. 8 on “Decent Work and Economic Growth”. Through their partnerships, FWD aims to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities in Asia, promoting inclusion, rehabilitation,

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization and The World Bank (2011). *World Report on Disability*.

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization (2002).



and vocational training to generate positive change and economic empowerment for people with disabilities, their families and their communities.

**ENDS**

**ABOUT FWD GROUP**

FWD Group spans Hong Kong & Macau, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, and Japan, offering life and medical insurance, general insurance and employee benefits across a number of its markets.

FWD is focused on creating fresh customer experiences, with easy-to-understand products, supported by digital technology. Through this customer-led approach, FWD aims to become a leading pan-Asian insurer that changes the way people feel about insurance.

Established in Asia in 2013, FWD is the insurance business of investment group, Pacific Century Group.

For more information please visit [WWW.FWD.COM](http://WWW.FWD.COM)

**ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC**

Special Olympics is a non-profit charitable organization that provides year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympics-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disability. Aside from sporting activities it is the world's largest provider of healthcare to people with intellectual disability.

Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown to more than 4.4 million athletes in 170 countries. With the support of more than 1.3 million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers more than 81,000 games and competitions throughout the year in 32 Olympic-type sports. It is supported by individuals, foundations and partners, including The Coca-Cola Company, Microsoft, The Walt Disney Company and ESPN, Lions Clubs International, Toys'R'Us, Mattel, Bank of America and the Essilor Vision Foundation.

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