

ANNEX B - INTER – RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS CONFIDENCE CIRCLES

The Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCCs) were formed in 2002 against the backdrop of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Re-positioned in 2006 to include religious organisations, the IRCCs serve as the local-level inter-faith platforms under the Community Engagement Programme (CEP) to respond quickly to incidents with racial and religious dimensions. Friendships and networks of trust are built during peace time to ensure that Singapore can withstand challenges and strains on social cohesion during crises.

2 The IRCCs serve as important bridges linking religious, ethnic and community groups at the local level. The Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) encourages religious and community leaders to join the IRCC networks to build friendships and trust. With MCCY's support, the IRCCs have organised many activities to deepen people's understanding of the various faiths, beliefs and practices, such as inter-faith heritage trails, inter-faith talks and dialogues and various ethnic and religious celebrations.

3 The IRCCs are also actively building up their capabilities to deal with crises, through participating in scenario-based exercises, preparing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and taking relevant courses, such as mediation and media spokesperson training/ In the aftermath of a crisis, they will be the key links to disseminate information, soothe and minimise communal tensions, and maintain confidence in the community.

4 All IRCCs, except for the two new IRCCs (Gambas and Limbang)*, have undergone crisis preparedness exercises since 2007. These include table-top exercises and over 20 IBX.

** Gambas IRCC is part of Sembawang GRC
Limbang IRCC is part of Marsiling - Yew Tee GRC*