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**SPEECH BY MR LUI TUCK YEW, MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, AT
CHANGI AIRPORT GROUP'S ANNUAL AIRPORT CELEBRATION
2015, THE RITZ CARLTON GRAND BALLROOM, 12 FEBRUARY 2015**

Mr Liew Mun Leong, Chairman of Changi Airport Group,

Mr Lee Seow Hiang, CEO,

Ladies and Gentlemen

1 Good evening. 2014 had been a difficult year in the world of aviation. While air traffic continued to grow in the region, we witnessed three heart-wrenching tragedies – Malaysia Airlines Flights 17 and 370, and Air Asia 8501. I was touched that the entire airport community stood together as one, to provide assistance to our Malaysian and Indonesian counterparts, as well as to the families of those on board the plane including through the setting up of a relatives holding area here at Changi. Many officers worked through the New Year holiday period even though they were on year-end leave, and I thank them for their sacrifices.

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2 2014 had not been an easy year for Changi Airport either. While it received its highest passenger traffic in our history, growth was just 0.7% year-on-year, due to a slowdown in tourism and capacity rationalisation by airlines. Nevertheless, Changi continues to be highly regarded by air travellers and members of the aviation industry. Last year alone, 24 'Best Airport' awards were added to Changi's list of more than 470 accolades since its opening in 1981. Of note is the 'Best Airport in the World' award from leading UK travel publication 'Business Traveller', which Changi has received 27 years in a row,

as well as the prestigious ‘World’s Best Airport’ award by Skytrax. This is a truly remarkable feat in the face of increasing competition from other airports around the world.

Outlook for Changi

3 2015 is expected to be another challenging year for Changi Airport and the aviation sector. Lower oil prices will offer some relief to the sector. Nonetheless, with the global economy still struggling to gain any momentum, airlines will have to continue to watch their bottom lines closely in an increasingly low-yield environment. Competition from other airports will continue to intensify, and the manpower situation will continue to be a challenge too. Aviation companies are gradually adapting to the norm of a tight labour market by relying on new technologies and redesigning their processes to enhance productivity. At the same time, however, we will have to make sure that the defining hallmarks of Changi, in particular our warm and personalised services, continue to be upheld, even as we move towards more automation and self-service.

4 Changi Airport is also embarking on projects to strengthen its value proposition to travellers. Last December, works for the construction of Jewel Changi Airport, as well as expansion works for Terminal 1 commenced. Works for the construction of Terminal 4 commenced in November 2013 and is progressing well. Land preparation works for the expansion in Changi East for Runway 3 and the new Terminal 5 have commenced.

5 What this also means is that over the coming years, parts of the airport will be affected, with certain facilities relocated, to allow construction works to take place. This may inconvenience our partners and passengers at some point.

Changi Airport Group and its partners have assured me that they will minimise the impact of these works. Most importantly, safety will never be compromised. For those who will be affected by the works, I seek your patience and support as we work to make our airport an even better one for everyone and for Singapore.

Changi, Our Home

6 Changi Airport belongs to and is loved by Singaporeans. A recent study by the Institute of Policy Studies saw Singaporeans ranking the opening of Changi Airport as one of the historical events most important to them. Other survey findings have also shown that Changi Airport is an icon of great pride to Singaporeans. In our upgrading and improvement works, we must make sure that Singaporeans' emotional attachment to Changi remains strong. For Singaporeans, Changi must continue to evoke feelings of happiness, familiarity and the comfort of coming home. For our passengers from around the world, Changi Airport must be more than just an airport; they should feel welcomed, secure and comfortable despite being in a foreign land. And for the airport community, Changi must be more than a workplace; it must be a second home where we support and care for one another like a family – and that is exactly what our service heroes have accomplished and will continue to strive to be.

7 This evening, we come together to honour these extraordinary people – individuals who have gone the extra mile to provide service; individuals who did not hesitate to put travellers' needs before their own; individuals who treated strangers like family. A fine example is Mr Mohd Jumaldi Bin Ayub from dnata (*pronounced Dee-Nah-Tah*), this year's "Service Personality of the Year". After recovering the baggage for an elderly Indonesian couple, one of whom had to be hospitalised due to a stroke suffered on board the flight, Jumaldi became a pillar of support for them over their next three weeks in

Singapore, assisting them in every possible way, as they were alone in Singapore. He coordinated with multiple parties including the hospital, the embassy and the airline, in settling arrangements for the elderly couple. I am touched by Jumatdi's compassion and empathy for the couple.

8 This year's Gold Award winner for "Outstanding Custodial Staff", Abidin Bin Bakhtiar, is another service hero who firmly embodies the Changi Service DNA. A trolley technician from Smarte Carte (*pronounced Smart-Cart*), Abidin went beyond the call of duty to assist a stranded passenger in distress. He bought her meals, rebooked her flight and arranged her hotel accommodation as well as her air ticket back home when he found out that she might not have the means to go home. Thank you for making our travellers feel at home in Changi Airport, even in the most unexpected moments.

9 Apart from our service staff, airport partners are also important members of the Changi Family. The "Service Partner of the Year" award recognises one key airport partner in its outstanding commitment to staff welfare and development, and its efforts to make a difference in passengers' experience at Changi Airport. Tonight, I congratulate Certis Cisco for its second consecutive win in this category.

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10 The Changi Airport community did not develop overnight; it was painstakingly built up year by year. In every small act of consideration that we show to one another, we strengthen our community. To the community, I would like to say a big thank you for your passion and commitment to continue delivering the renowned first-class Changi Experience to our passengers day after day. The success of Changi has always been because of its people, and the teamwork between the airport, airlines, Government agencies and other airport partners. Your efforts are much appreciated.

Changi is where the Heart is

11 An exciting new future lies ahead for Changi. With the steadfast support of the airport community, and working together as a family, I am confident that we will soar to yet greater heights. I look forward to continuing this amazing journey with all of you.

12 Thank you.

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