

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY DPM LEE HSIEN LOONG
ON THE INAUGURATION OF THE ANG MO KIO-CHENG SAN,
CENTRAL SINGAPORE AND NORTHEAST
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS
AT THE SINGAPORE ORCHID COUNTRY CLUB
ON SATURDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 1997 AT 12.00 NOON**

I am happy to join you today to inaugurate three more Community Development Councils (CDCs). They are:

The Ang Mo Kio-Cheng San CDC, covering Ang Mo Kio Group Representative Constituency (GRC) and Cheng San GRC;

The Northeast CDC, covering Aljunied GRC, Pasir Ris GRC and Tampines GRC; and

The Central Singapore CDC, covering Kreta Ayer-Tanglin GRC, Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC, Jalan Besar GRC and Kampong Glam Constituency.

Together these CDCs represent a population of 1.3 million spread over one-quarter of Singapore's land area.

The Government set up CDCs to encourage and enable local communities to better meet their own communal needs - to raise funds, run

community programmes, recruit, train and deploy local volunteers, and address the specific problems of less fortunate members. The CDCs foster community bonding and encourage self-reliance and mutual support. This will strengthen the sense of belonging and community among the local residents, regardless of their social background. We hope especially that more successful Singaporeans will come forward to volunteer their time and energies through the CDCs.

CDCs share similar objectives with many Voluntary Welfare Organisations or VWOs, Self Help Groups and charitable organisations. So CDCs will not reinvent the wheel, or duplicate work already being done. Instead CDCs will cooperate with these other community organisations on joint projects, and harness greater resources, including support from the government, to do more.

We should combine the expertise and enthusiasm of the VWOs and Self Help Groups, with the CDCs' grassroots network and local knowledge, to reach out to more people. In particular, four target groups can benefit from such help: the elderly, the youth, the disabled and the poor.

Many VWOs have already responded to this opportunity, and are already exploring specific projects with the CDCs. For example, the Central Singapore CDC is setting up a Joint Social Service Centre (JSSC) with all five Self Help Groups – the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP), the Chinese Development Assistant Council (CDAC), MENDAKI, the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA) and the Eurasian Association. This is the first time a CDC and all the Self Help Groups are pooling their resources to serve all ethnic communities. They will share a building. Among other activities, CDAC will run a Student Service Centre, MENDAKI and SINDA

will operate Family Service Centres, and all three will jointly organise sports, recreational and study activities. To show its support and encouragement, the Government has agreed to let the JSSC use the Toa Payoh West Community Centre building.

The other CDCs have identified several projects in collaboration with community organisations. These are tailored to their different demographic compositions and local needs. They include Student Service Centres; Before and After School Care Assistance Schemes; Adoption of Parks and Precincts; Mentoring Disadvantaged and Disabled Children; Extension to a Sheltered Home for the Poor Elderly; Senior Citizens Activities and Rehabilitation Centres; Hangouts and Youth Clubs and meals on wheels for the needy.

These joint projects are good vehicles for bringing people together and getting them involved in local affairs. As they see their contributions directly helping others around them, they will also forge a stronger common Singaporean identity. This sense of ownership and active participation are vital. Working together and sharing a common vision is the best way to build a more cohesive community.

The recent financial crisis in the region reminds us how vulnerable we are. For all the promise of high growth and shared prosperity in the Asia Pacific region, we are bound to run into instability and problems from time to time. We therefore need to work closely with one another to survive and thrive as a nation.

The success of the CDCs depends very much on local support. It is up to the community leaders and Members of Parliament (MPs) to make the

most of the resources and organisation which will now be at their disposal.
Everyone has a part to play in making their community their best home.

I wish the Ang Mo Kio-Cheng San CDC, Central Singapore CDC
and Northeast CDC every success.

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