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Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY MR SIDEK SANIFF, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AT THE 1999  
HSBC/NYAA YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY AT SINGAPORE BOTANIC  
GARDENS ON SAT, 15 MAY 99 AT 10 AM

Prof Leo Tan

Chairman,

National Youth Achievement Award Council

Mr Connal Rankin

General Manager and Chief Executive Officer

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Ltd

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

1 I am happy to join you this morning at the 1999 HSBC/NYAA Youth  
Environmental Award Presentation Ceremony. This ceremony marks another milestone in  
the partnership and co-operation between the National Youth Achievement Award  
Council and The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

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2 This award was established by the Council and the HSBC, with the support of my Ministry, to recognize and honour young people who have distinguished themselves in the field of environmental protection and nature conservation in Singapore. Underlying this award is the strong belief that young people are important partners and allies in raising environmental awareness and triggering environmental action. Such timely investments in our youths will help to build up an environmentally aware and responsible citizenry that is committed to the protection of our environment.

3 Indeed, one of the key ideas under the Singapore 21 vision that was recently released by the Prime Minister was the promotion of "Active Citizens". This is especially pertinent with respect to environmental issues as environmental protection is not just the duty of the Government or the private sector, but is the collective responsibility of every individual. Each of us must learn to take ownership of our living environment, and become active participants, not mere observers or talkers, in environmental protection efforts.

4 This Youth Award represents a positive step in that direction by inspiring and motivating youths to become more engaged in meaningful environmental activities through participating in overseas environmental conservation and educational projects, organised by the NYAA counterparts. Such exposure would help our young people gain a broader perspective on environmental issues and challenges in the region and worldwide. Thus, this collaborative award under the auspices of NYAA and HSBC not only injects a very constructive element into our national youth development initiative, it has an impact that goes beyond our shores.

5 Judging from the number of nominations received by the NYAA Council this year, the Award is well received by schools and youth organisations. This is indeed very encouraging. I am confident that this Award will grow in profile and stature, and serve to spur our young winners every year on to greater heights and achievements for the environmental cause and for the community.

6 I understand that the young winners this year will have the opportunity to visit Thailand and participate in an Elephant Conservation Programme there. This is indeed an excellent opportunity for our youths to gain valuable insights into the environmental challenges our neighbours face and how they tackle them.

7 I trust this expedition to Thailand will provide our young leaders much needed exposure to the regional and international efforts being made in protecting and conserving our natural heritage. Perhaps, they may even be able to offer some constructive ideas to help the environmental cause.

8 I certainly hope that our award winners will treasure this eye-opening exposure and return to Singapore with a greater commitment to the environmental cause in the region.

9 I would like to take this opportunity to commend the HSBC Singapore and NYAA Council for providing our Singapore youths the opportunity to participate in such a unique project annually through the HSBC/NYAA Youth Environmental Award Scheme.

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10 In conclusion, my congratulations to the winners of the 1999 HSBC/NYAA Youth Environmental Award and to all schools and tertiary institutions who supported the Award by nominating your students.

11 Thank you.

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