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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Mr David Lim, 2 Oct 99, 10.30 am

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR DAVID T E LIM, MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND INFORMATION AND THE
ARTS, AT THE CHILDREN'S CHARITIES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL AWARDS PRESENTATION ON 2
OCTOBER 99 AT THE MANDARIN HOTEL AT 10.30 AM

Ladies and gentlemen:

I am happy to be here this morning to present awards to sponsors, donors and volunteers on behalf of the Children's Charities Association. The organisations and the men and women we thank and honour this morning are outstanding examples of civic society at work. They have contributed by their actions what many words alone cannot achieve, and have brought practical and meaningful benefit to many children.

These are ordinary people, and yet they are special. The recipients today come from many walks of life. They represent companies, clubs and societies, voluntary

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welfare, religious and grassroots organisations, the media, schools, and government agencies. Some are here in their personal capacities. A few represent the estates of civic minded persons who cared for the needy when they were alive, and made provisions for them even after they had passed away.

These people are like you and I. Their actions may seem quite ordinary. But the spirit that have moved them to action is not. We salute them today because they made an effort to care for those less fortunate than themselves. Many in society today speak of creating a more caring community - but this is something easier said than done. Only some have been willing to sacrifice time and resources to bring this about. That is why these people we thank today are special. They have made a difference by putting words into action.

Their spirit of wanting to contribute is the spirit of Singapore 21. Over the past 6 months, many government and civic leaders have spoken about Singapore 21 - our vision to make Singapore a better society and a vibrant nation in the 21st century. Some people have asked me what they can do to bring about this vision. I would encourage them to follow the fine example set by today's recipients.

The essence of Singapore 21 is heartware. As a country, we have succeeded in building good hardware - like roads and buildings - and good software - like our education and healthcare systems. But when we talk about heartware, we refer to the strong bonds of trust and care amongst our people. Our bonds must be strong for us to meet the challenges ahead, and for us to become the vibrant and strong society of our Vision.

To achieve this, we need each and every citizen to be actively involved in and contributing to the community. As Chairman of the Singapore 21 Facilitation Committee, I am often asked what the committee plans to do. My response, which reflects the consensus of my committee members, is: "Not a lot". That's not because we are a lazy committee. We are working hard, thinking through how best to bring about this vision. But we believe that the only way for Singapore 21 to take root is when each Singaporean realises that it is his or her personal involvement that will enable us to realise Singapore 21.

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As a committee, we would like to urge Singaporeans to join at least one community-oriented organisation, such as the Children's Charities Association, and to take on an active role. This is the first step. It is only when you get involved in organising activities, and have an active part to play, that you begin to feel a part of the organisation and the cause. And as a member of the group, your actions will encourage others, just as their support for you will encourage you. We believe that through this process of mutual encouragement, and through seeing how the work you do benefits others, you will develop commitment and passion for the cause. Only when this emotional attachment is reached will it be possible for you to sustain your involvement in community work.

Ladies and gentlemen, I speak today to the converted. But I hope that your example will inspire others to come forward. I would urge you never to tire of the good work you are doing. Instead, you can contribute even more, by going out and recruiting new members to join your cause.

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Once again, I thank you for all the happiness that you have brought to the children by your selfless efforts, and wish you all best as you continue to play your part in building our future.

Thank you.

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