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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Dr John Chen, 8 Nov 99, 9.30am

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY DR JOHN CHEN, MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & MINISTER OF
STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE ADOPTION OF
KAMPONG JAVA PARK BY KK WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ON MONDAY, 8 NOV 99 AT 9.30
AM AT KAMPONG JAVA PARK, BUKIT TIMAH ROAD

Prof Leo Tan, Chairman National Parks Board;

Dr Jennifer Lee, CEO, KK Women's and Children's Hospital;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Introduction

It is indeed an honour for me to join you this morning for a very refreshing project -- the adoption of a park by a hospital. The KK Women's and Children's Hospital is renowned for providing dedicated medical care and services to thousands of women and children in Singapore over the years. This park-adoption project is an extension of the hospital's function as a provider of community care.

The Adopt-A-Park Scheme

2 The National Parks Board, or NParks, launched its Adopt-A-Park Scheme in February 1997 to promote greater appreciation of our natural environment and to enhance community bonding through partnerships and activities held in public parks. The Scheme's success with schools has encouraged NParks to extend it to grassroots organisations, uniformed groups and now, a hospital. For NParks, working hand in hand with a health-care institution for the first time under this Scheme opens yet another window of opportunity to strengthen community cohesion and cultivate social responsibility in relation to public amenities.

Adoption of Kampong Java Park by KK Hospital

3 I understand that KK Hospital has in recent years taken a step beyond its main role of providing health care to the community. The hospital has been working with its corporate and community partners to foster close ties with society through various projects and programmes. The adoption of Kampong Java Park is yet another step towards fostering closer community bonds.

4 As part of this park adoption, hospital staff have designed and planted a landscaped garden. This garden is part of a larger landscape plan to develop the park into a therapeutic garden. The intention is to enable patients to use the park as a "window of healing". Hospital staff and their community partners, which includes volunteers, will also be involved in the maintenance of this garden. In so doing, they will no doubt, experience the therapeutic effects of gardening and also be promoting the idea of "greening for health".

5 The opportunities that can be realised through such community partnerships have far reaching implications. One possibility is to involve students of Monk's Hill Secondary School, which is also an adopter of Kampong Java Park. The three-way involvement of a school, hospital and NParks to organise activities in the park for the hospital's young patients may help speed up the healing process. This will also help the younger generation to develop strong community bonds, thereby laying the foundations for a better society in the long run.

6 I understand that a calendar of activities will be drawn up to encourage the use of Kampong Java Park as a permanent venue for community programmes organised by the park's adopters. This will further enhance community bonding.

Conclusion

7 The Adopt-A-Park Scheme hopes to bring home the message that parks and greenery belong to each and every Singaporean and that we should work together to look after these treasures. In the wider context, this Scheme lays the foundation for citizens' participation in building the Singapore we want for the future. Active citizens are participants and not mere observers. They form a people sector that complements the public and private sectors in bringing about a better society for us all.

8 I wish to congratulate the staff of KK Women's and Children's Hospital and the National Parks Board for the effort in putting together this park-adoption project. I hope that many Singaporeans will benefit from it in the years to come.

9 Thank you.