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Subject: Speech by Dr Ow Chin Hock, 22 Jan 00, 12nn

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY DR OW CHIN HOCK
MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
MAYOR FOR TANJONG PAGAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL AND CHAIRMAN OF TANJONG PAGAR-WEST COAST
TOWN COUNCIL
LAUNCH OF THE FOOD HYGIENE PROGRAMME AT
BUKIT MERAH FOOD CENTRE ON SATURDAY, 22 JAN 2000 @ 12
NOON

1 Food is something close to the hearts of most Singaporeans, whether cosmopolitans or heartlanders. In a family gathering or friends meeting up, food is one of the important things that bring Singaporeans together. Many of you have experienced in going around Singapore looking and queuing up for well known “mee pok”, chicken rice, “roti-prata”, or “mee rebus” etc, with

friends and family members.

2 But great tasting hawker food is not the only thing that many Singaporeans are now looking for. With better education and greater health consciousness, Singaporeans are increasingly aware of the hygiene of the food and environment where they eat. Your customers are more careful about which stalls they patronise, the food they eat and how food is prepared. Hawkers, stallholders and food establishments must meet these expectations and strive towards serving their customers clean and safe food. These are mutually beneficial : customers' interests are protected, and your food establishment's reputation and business will increase.

3 The food business is a thriving one in Singapore : each year, more people start up their own food establishments. To maintain or enhance your competition edge, you must have the know-how, knowledge and make your food tasty. At the same time, the food you serve must be clean and hygienic.

4 Serving clean and hygienic food means preparing your food hygienically, looking after your personal hygiene, store and handle food properly, understanding how food can turn bad or how it can become contaminated and take steps to avoid this happening and finally making sure your premises is clean and housekeeping is neat. These may be regarded as parts of the knowledge-based economy.

5 I take this opportunity to congratulate the members of the Bukit Merah Central Merchants' and Hawkers Association for taking the first step to organise this event on food hygiene to spread the message of serving clean and

safe food. You have even gone further to pledge your commitment to serving your customers clean and safe food. I hope the initiatives of your Association will set an example for other food establishments to make the same pledge to their customers.

6 The Bukit Merah Central Food Centre won a bronze medal for the Islandwide Cleanest Food Centre Competition 1999/2000. In this context, I would like to suggest in future year competition of Islandwide Cleanest Food Centre Competition, the organising committee may consider to have two categories – one for older hawker centres, and another for newer centres, as in the case of Islandwide Cleanest Precinct Competition.

7 It now gives me great pleasure to unveil the commitment pledge of the Bukit Merah Central Merchants' and Hawkers' Association.

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