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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Dr Lee Boon Yang, 19 Feb 2000, 1300hrs

# *Singapore Government*

## ***PRESS RELEASE***

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**SPEECH BY DR LEE BOON YANG  
MINISTER FOR MANPOWER  
AT THE COUNTER STAFF RECOGNITION CEREMONY  
HELD ON SATURDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2000 AT 1300 HRS  
MINISTRY OF MANPOWER BUILDING LOBBY, 1ST LEVEL**

National Archives of Singapore

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen

1 First, let me congratulate all the 211 staff who are receiving awards and tokens of appreciation today. It is very heartening to see our colleagues at the frontline rising to the challenges and continuing to give first class services to our customers. This year, 104 officers are receiving the monthly counter allowance for meeting specified service standards in 1999.

2 Due credit must also be given to the 107 officers who performed counter duties, but do not qualify for the allowance as they do not spend the majority of their time on counter work. Their contributions are just as important in our efforts to deliver outstanding services to our customers.

3 This year's Best Service Award goes to Mrs Chow-Song Koi Eng of the Employment Pass Department. Mrs Chow has been receiving favourable feedback each month from customers who praise her for being courteous, helpful and competent in her work. Her cheerful disposition at work and willingness to go beyond the call of duty to help customers did not escape the attention of her supervisors, who noted her willingness to continuously learn and improve herself so that she can better serve her customers.

4 Mrs Chow, who was seconded from the Singapore Immigration and Registration, sets an example for quality service, positive attitude and a genuine willingness to serve. Her customer feedback shows that good service will be appreciated. Mrs Chow has since opted to join the Ministry, instead of remaining as a seconded staff. Welcome to the MOM family. I am confident that Mrs Chow will continue to provide the excellent service to the Ministry's customers and hope that she can inspire our colleagues to do the same.

5 It is important to remember that a willingness to serve is no longer enough for our customers. They not only want helpful counter staff, they expect the staff to be knowledgeable and be able to offer solutions to their problems. This means that each and every MOM staff must constantly stay informed and knowledgeable about the Ministry's various policies.

6 We also recognise that quality service goes beyond efficiency, knowledge, and willingness to help. As our customers become more sophisticated, they will expect counter staff to be cheerful, understanding and to be able to put himself or herself in the customer's shoes. As the personal touch in services becomes more relevant in our progressive society, the ability to listen and empathise with the customers makes a big difference to the quality of service, and affects how they perceive the Ministry.

7 Because of these higher expectations, we cannot stress enough the need for continuous training and development for staff. Hence, the Ministry has embarked on building a People Developer framework. This will provide all staff with opportunities for continuous improvement, both in the knowledge of our work as well as in soft skills that help us to better relate to the customers. This framework is definitely in line with the Ministry's larger goal of developing the potential of our workforce.

8 As the voices and faces representing the Ministry, it is imperative that we project the right image and provide the best possible services. On this note, and on behalf of everyone in the Ministry, let me convey our deepest appreciation to all the staff here for the excellent service that you have continued to deliver.

9 Thank you.

National Archives of Singapore