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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by SR Nathan, 26 Feb 00, 5 pm

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT S R NATHAN AT THE SCOUT RALLY 2000 ON
SATURDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2000 AT 5.00 PM AT CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

Fellow Scouts

Ladies and Gentlemen

National Archives of Singapore

I am pleased to be part of today's Scout Rally to celebrate World Scout Day.

2 In the 90 years of scouting in Singapore, the Singapore Scouts Association has contributed a fair share towards Singapore's development. The scout movement has helped mould many young lives to be responsible and resourceful individuals. Scouting has also helped our youth by contributing to their rounded education by nurturing leadership qualities

and strong values which prepared them for a successful adult life as responsible and useful members of society.

3 I believe that uniformed youth organisations such as the scouts will still play such a useful role even as we move towards an increasingly knowledge-intensive future. For while it is important for our survival that our people acquire the needed knowledge and skills, that alone would never make us a nation where we feel belonged, and a gracious society where we want to live in and raise our families. In such a changing and knowledge-based world, we must develop our youth in a holistic manner. Formal academic education will need to be complemented by opportunities for the young to be exposed to activities that will help in their personal development and growth, and in character building. The young must grow up knowing the importance of service and charity in public life.

4 I had found my experience as a scout when I was a young boy to be not only fun, but also an enriching experience. I was only a Tenderfoot - which is equivalent to attaining the “World Scout Badge” in today’s scouting terms - but it made me feel a sense of importance belonging to a group of boys of different ages – many older than me – who showered care on me and chose to take me under their wings. In a way, they were mentors to whom one could turn to, beyond the schoolwork problems. As a young scout, I looked upon my leaders with awe, as their aura of leadership impacted on me – especially the numerous badges they displayed all over their shirt.

5 Many things have changed since. I can never relive my youth and hope to be a Tenderfoot again. Neither can you, once you have grown up.

6 For you who are part of the scout movement today, I must remind you that you are now in your formative years -

a time when your values and outlook in life are being moulded;
a time to try many new and challenging activities to increase your self-confidence and
to acquire many useful life skills;
a time to learn about service to the community;
a time to share in the values and experiences of your seniors;
and most of all, a time to cherish, because it will pass you all too soon.

7 I would therefore urge you to make the most of your boyhood days as a Scout, and
also to enjoy the camaraderie and the friendships you will acquire as you journey through life
as a member of the scout movement.

8 I wish you happy scouting, an enriching experience of personal development and self-
discovery, and every success in life.

National Archives of Singapore