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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Mr Abdullah Tarmugi, 29 Mar 2000, 12.30 pm

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR ABDULLAH TARMUGI,
MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,
AT THE LIA VOLUNTEER AWARDS PRESENTATION,
ON WED, 29 MAR 2000, AT 12.30 PM
AT MARRIOTT HOTEL, THE GRAND BALLROOM**

Good Afternoon
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Mr Tan Suee Chieh, President of the Life Insurance Association, Singapore

Dr Richard Eu, Chairman, Community Chest

I am glad to be here this afternoon at the 10th Anniversary of the Life Insurance Association (LIA) Volunteer Awards Presentation. I would like to commend the Life Insurance Association for its dedication in contributing to the community and for organising this awards presentation to honour those who serve the community without expecting any

reward or recognition.

2 Volunteerism has always been a subject close to my heart. Not just because it is an issue under the purview of the Ministry of Community Development, but because it is one of the most important ingredients for building a cohesive and resilient community. It is one of the key driving force in strengthening our sense of rootedness and community bonding.

3 At a Workshop on Volunteerism in November 1998, we sought feedback from volunteers and volunteer user organisations on how we could promote volunteerism in Singapore. The suggestions we received contributed towards the setting up of the National Volunteer Centre, or NVC, to drive volunteerism in Singapore and to encourage greater participation in volunteer work.

4 I understand that this year's LIA Volunteer Award is, for the first time, open to foreigners who have been residing in Singapore for three or more years. I applaud this initiative. It is indeed timely that we recognise and include friends of our community in such an award. As Singapore globalises, we will have a growing international community living in Singapore. Many of our foreign friends living here participate very actively in community service.

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5 Not only do we welcome them to participate in Singapore's economy, we also welcome them to interact with Singaporeans, to join us in contributing to the Singapore community. They too can play a role in making Singapore a caring and active community.

6 Volunteerism is not a new phenomenon among foreigners resident in Singapore. I am happy to note that many in the expatriate community have taken a lead in voluntary work. In April last year, US firms and the American expatriate community got together to offer their skills and resources to charities. Together, they set up a charitable project called

“Friendship Works”. They offered their premises, equipment, expertise and financial assistance to a number of local charities. Another sterling example is the American Women's Association which donated a total of \$135,000 to more than 20 charitable organisations. The members of the Japanese Women's Volunteer Group have also been actively volunteering at the Singapore Cheshire Home. Apart from this, many others also volunteer their time in a range of community services including helping out at the Singapore Zoo and the local museums. These are but a few examples of how our foreign friends contribute to our community. I would like to commend them for their dedication and good work.

7 It is my hope that we will increasingly see even closer collaboration between local and expatriate volunteers. Many of these volunteers come from countries where volunteerism is an integral part of their lifestyle.

8 They bring with them their unique experiences, expertise and ideas on volunteer management. By working together, there can be a cross-fertilisation of ideas on recruiting, retaining and managing volunteers in Singapore.

9 This afternoon, I would like to commend all the recipients of the LIA Volunteer Award both Singaporeans and expatriates for their hard work and selfless contributions. I hope that today's award winners will be a continual source of inspiration to others. I encourage them to keep up their excellent work, and I am confident that they will continue to derive as much satisfaction from their work as their beneficiaries do from their contributions.

10 My best wishes to you and I hope you have a pleasant day.

Thank you.