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**SPEECH BY MR SIDEK SANIFF SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE (ENVIRONMENT) AT THE LAUNCH OF CAR FREE DAY ORGANISED BY THE SINGAPORE ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL AT THE RAFFLES CITY ATRIUM THU 19 APRIL 2001, 10.40 AM**

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Distinguish Guests Ladies and Gentlemen

A good morning to everyone.

It is my pleasure to be here this morning to launch this Car Free Day.

2 First of all, let me congratulate the SEC for staging this event. I understand that this event has gained popularity in some European cities because it provides a short reprieve from serious air pollution caused by vehicular traffic.

3 The Car Free Day in Singapore gives us a window in our busy schedules to appreciate the good ambient air of Singapore. It also helps to create public awareness of the need to minimise, if not prevent, pollution from cars. I am pleased to note that SEC is being joined by some 39 private and public sector organizations, which have pledged their support to make this event a success. I have no doubt that they will find this awareness building effort meaningful.

4 The focus of today's Car Free Day event could also be seen in the light of preventing pollution from cars. We are probably all too familiar with the pollution and harm caused by emission from vehicles, in particular diesel vehicles and two-stroke motorcycles. In fact, many cities in the world today face immense air pollution problem because of the lack of effective vehicle emission control programmes.

5 On the other hand, besides the usual air pollutants such as smoke particulates, vehicles also emit carbon dioxide which is a greenhouse gas. Although vehicles contribute to less than 15% of carbon dioxide emission in Singapore, every little bit of vehicular emissions that we can curb will also contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating global warming. Switching to natural gas can reduce carbon dioxide emission by up to 25%.

6 To complement the SEC's Car Free Day initiative, ENV is also carrying out a public education campaign today. Our officers will be handing out educational pamphlets to owners and drivers of diesel vehicles and motorcycles. The education materials contain information on the proper maintenance and use of vehicles to prevent smoke emissions.

7 Let me once again congratulate SEC and the supporting organizations for putting together this event. We all have one common goal. Let us work together towards a clean and green Singapore and make Singapore our best home.

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