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SPEECH BY MR S DHANABALAN,
MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE LAUNCH OF
THE BOOK "THE GOLDEN SHOE : BUILDING SINGAPORE'S
FINANCIAL DISTRICT" AT EMPRESS PLACE MUSEUM
ON SATURDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 1989 AT 11.00 AM

The transformation of Singapore's city skyline has become a symbol of our progress in urban development. The cluster of modern highrise buildings at Raffles Place and along Shenton Way, Cecil Street and Robinson Road houses Singapore's central financial and business district, an area now known as the Golden Shoe.

It is, therefore, fitting that the story of the transformation of this area should be made widely known through the launching of the book, "The Golden Shoe: Building Singapore's Financial District". This book, published by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), documents an important chapter in the history of Singapore's physical development. It also records the collaborative efforts of the public and private sectors in this transformation.

So far, 29 projects have resulted from the URA's site sales in the enlarged Golden Shoe. These projects have generated an investment totalling \$2 billion, and floor space of more than half a million sq metres.

We are now poised to commence a new and exciting chapter as we make plans to extend the downtown into the Marina South. The Government has approved and earlier announced the reclamation of the additional land at Marina Bay. The plans for the new downtown will be announced early

next year. The announcement will soon be followed by land sales, to meet the growing need for prime office space.

Besides the new downtown, our planners are also looking at two other aspects of our city development in order to reach our goal of creating an excellent city for a better quality of life.

To further beautify our physical environment, we will next focus on the design of river works, large drainage schemes and waterfront land profiles. Our canals and large storm water drains have been designed and constructed as efficient drainage outlets. While functional, this often results in harsh-looking large concrete lined canals. The storm water reservoirs serve their primary function but they can be better dressed up to enhance the quality of the surrounding environment. Similarly, reclamation profiles which are often straight and somewhat monotonous, can be made more interesting. We will explore alternative ways which are more beautiful and functional as well as more beneficial to users.

We will set up a "Waterbodies Design Panel" to advise us on the design and layout, and how we can improve the aesthetics of all major waterways and waterfront developments. The "Waterbodies Design Panel" will comprise a multi-disciplinary group of planners, architects and engineers from different departments and organisations. The Panel will be chaired by URA's Chief Executive Officer and Chief Planner.

It will assist the Master Plan Committee (MPC) in the evaluation of new large drainage schemes, rivers, waterways and waterfront developments. The Committee will refer major projects to the Panel for consideration. The Panel can suggest improvements to the design and layout of such developments to integrate them as water features in the urban landscape.

The second area of interest will be the attention we will be paying to revitalise the northern part of our city around the Bugis and Lavender MRT Stations. This is an area that is steeped in history and has a wealth of architecturally interesting old buildings. The URA hopes to include this area in the main stream activities of CBD, equal in the quality of building structures to the best in our downtown area. The URA plans to inject within this area good quality office, shopping and hotel facilities. The challenge here is to renew the city, and provide sufficient opportunities for economic development and at the same time, retain some of the charm of old Singapore.

Next week, the URA will put this challenge to the test when it launches the sale of four sites at the old Bugis Street and Albert Street. The sites will challenge the imagination of the potential developers to blend new buildings with some existing buildings which will be retained.

Our planners' efforts in these areas will, I hope, help us to work towards a distinctive city of excellence, different from any other city. We will then be well on the way to become the first truly developed city on the equator.

I wish to congratulate the URA for producing this book which is the first of a series documenting Singapore's urban redevelopment. The book also helps to explain the social and economic conditions under which this redevelopment took place. It is important that as we refine what we have created, we document our lessons learnt for our friends and colleagues and for future generations.

It gives me great pleasure, now, to launch "The Golden Shoe : Building Singapore's Financial District".

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