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SPEECH BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,  
AT THE LAUNCHING OF  
THE MINISTRY'S STRATEGIC PLANNING AND WORKPLAN SEMINAR  
HELD AT THE ENVIRONMENT THEATRETTE  
ON FRIDAY, 27 MARCH 1992 AT 9.15 AM

First let me congratulate the organisers for their efforts in putting up this Strategic Planning and Workplan Seminar. I believe that this is the first time that the Ministry is conducting such a seminar.

Singapore has come a long way since the days when littered streets and waterways were common sights. Singapore now ranks as one of the cleanest and healthiest cities in the world. The success in creating this healthy living environment has been inextricably linked to the good performance of our Ministry. I am proud to say that we have all played a part in making improvements to the state of the environment over the past two decades.

Since its formation in 1972, the Ministry of the Environment has demonstrated that it has been an efficient organisation, capable of implementing timely policy measures to safeguard the environment. We have also been able to ensure that our environmental infrastructure development kept pace with the rapid socio-economic development of Singapore.

In the last few years, we also witnessed the drastic changes in the global political scene. With the end of the cold war, the world is marked with the beginning of a new era and it creates a climate conducive for co-operation and collaboration between nations. This sense of global stability and security has prompted many nations to adopt a higher international profile. There is also a growing awareness that in spite of the diminished threat of war in the world, nations must unite to wage a new war against the global environmental problems. Singapore is indeed no exception to this emerging global trend and I am confident

that Singapore will stand to do well as a key player in the international arena.

With this development as a background, the decision to undertake strategic planning is timely, in that it offers the Ministry an opportunity to review its traditional roles amidst the ongoing changes around us. The idea of strategic planning was first conceptualised in 1989. It came at a time when the Ministry was in a good position to take stock of its past achievements and examine its future role. In the process, the Ministry was able to assess critically its strengths and weaknesses and thereby determine the role Ministry of Environment (ENV) could play to support international efforts to protect the global environment.

Central to this strategic planning process was, of course, the evolvement of the Ministry's mission statement, which aims to develop Singapore into a model Green City. To my mind, the Green City must have the following components:

- a. maintaining high standards of public health and a quality environment;
- b. cultivating an environmentally conscious, responsible and pro-active population, caring for not just the immediate environment but for the global environment as well; and
- c. providing services as a regional centre for environmental technology.

I am sure that in the course of this seminar, you will discuss and brainstorm how the objectives can be achieved. Most recently, the Ministry has unveiled the Green Plan. The main thrust of the Green Plan is to help chart the course for Singapore to develop into a model Green City by the year 2000. Two public forums on the Green Plan were conducted by the Ministry for both the industries and members of the public. The response from the participants was most encouraging and very useful and constructive comments were received. I am happy to

announce that this feedback has been incorporated into the final Green Plan which will soon be ready.

In the same way that the public has responded so well to the Ministry's call for feedback on the Green Plan, it is my hope to see that all levels of management within the Ministry be actively involved to contribute to the success of the Strategic Plan. I understand that the design of the Strategic Plan is such that it allows feedback from the departments on a periodic basis. Plans which were developed earlier may be reviewed and modified to take new policies and developments into consideration. In this regard, I would like to urge you to take the opportunity to play an active role in determining the Ministry's future direction.

Finally, let me wish you a fruitful and successful seminar. I am sure the organisers would also appreciate your assistance in encouraging other staff members of ENV, who are not here today, to participate actively in the strategic planning process.

On that note, it is my pleasure to launch the Ministry's Strategic Plan.

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