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SPEECH BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND MINISTER IN-CHARGE OF MUSLIM AFFAIRS AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE VIDEO DOCU-DRAMA ON MALAY CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS, ON SATURDAY, 18 APR 92 AT 2000 HRS, AT THE GEYLANG SERAI MALAY VILLAGE

We, in Singapore, have been enjoying racial harmony since independence. This only goes to show that our people value social cohesion and we put in a lot of care to preserve and strengthen racial harmony.

2 However, we must not take this for granted. The Singapore society is as fragile as any other multi-racial societies. If our ethnic communities forget about the need for mutual understanding, respect and tolerance of each other's cultural and religious practices, our society too can be torn apart.

3 Therefore, we must not be complacent. What we should do is to build upon the social capital of good inter-ethnic relationship that we already have and find ways and means to consolidate it. One way is to create more opportunities for Singaporeans of different races to interact with one another and to learn and appreciate the cultures of the other communities. In this regard, I am happy that the Ministry of Community Development (MCD) together with the various ethnic communities are producing 3 video docu-dramas, one each on Chinese, Malay and Indian cultures. The video docu-drama on Malay Customs and Beliefs which is being launched this evening is produced by MCD with the help of Majlis Pusat and a group of experts on Malay culture.

4 I hope these video docu-dramas and the series of public education programmes that follow after each launching will not only help to generate greater public interest to learn the various ethnic cultures we

have here in Singapore, but also serve as a starting point for grassroots and ethnic organisations, schools and other community groups to introduce more programmes and activities to promote mutual understanding and respect among our people.

5 In conclusion, I would like to congratulate MCD, the National Community Organisations Council (NCOC) and the Majlis Pusat for organising this function. And it could not have been more fitting than to have the launching ceremony held against a backdrop of Malay culture and traditions found in this Geylang Serai Malay Village.

6 I wish you a pleasant and an enjoyable evening.

7 And on that note, it is my pleasure now to launch this video docu-drama on Malay Customs and Beliefs.

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