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**SPEECH BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT  
AT THE OPENING OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE  
INDONESIA-SINGAPORE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT  
HELD ON 20 APRIL 1992 AT 9.15 AM IN THE ENV BUILDING**

1. Let me first of all welcome Mr Nabil Makarim and his Indonesian colleagues to Singapore. Last November, we were honoured by the visit of Prof Dr Emil Salim, the Indonesian State Minister for Population and the Environment who was in Singapore as an official guest of the Government of Singapore. The visit enabled us to discuss many environmental issues, both of global and regional significance. It led us to agree that further co-operation on environmental matters between our two countries could be best served through a joint committee that would meet regularly.

2. Today, I am privileged to officiate at the inaugural meeting of the Indonesia-Singapore Joint Committee on the Environment (ISJCE). I applaud the effort put in by officials of both countries for their ability to activate the ISJCE so soon after the idea was conceived. I am sure that if Pak Emil was here, he would also join me in thanking you for realising our hope and desire for closer co-operation on environmental matters between our two countries.

3. Traditionally, Singapore and Indonesia have enjoyed close economic and political ties. I am convinced that this synergistic relationship will continue to strengthen, especially in the pursuit of economic development. With the formation of the ISJCE, the stage is now set for closer environmental co-operation which will complement the close economic linkages.

4. Indonesia and Singapore, as member countries of ASEAN, are parties to the 1987 Jakarta Resolution on Sustainable Development. The Jakarta Resolution was made at the Third ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment under the able chairmanship of Pak Emil himself. With the formation of the ISJCE, we can now work towards a greater attainment of the principle of sustainable development in both countries.

5. We know the truism of the statement that environmental pollution knows no geographical boundaries. We also acknowledge that effective environmental protection begins at home. The ISJCE will serve to enhance our respective national capabilities to prevent our national environmental problems from becoming transboundary issues. It will also be a forum for us to jointly deal with transboundary issues affecting both countries. A successful ISJCE would benefit not only Indonesia and Singapore, but the ASEAN region as a whole.

6. I am told that on the agenda today are issues such as the sharing of expertise to build up human resources for environmental management and control. Over the past few years, Singapore has acquired some experience in environmental management which we hope will benefit our friends from Indonesia. In the same way, Singapore can learn from Indonesia's experience.

7. As members of the ISJCE, you have been given a heavy responsibility. But I know that under the capable guidance of the two Co-Chairmen, and in the traditional spirit of friendship and co-operation, it will be a responsibility well carried. I wish the two Co-Chairmen, Mr Nabiel Makarim, Deputy for Pollution Control of the Indonesian Environmental Impact Management Agency (or BAPEDAL, in short) and Mr Cheong Quee Wah, Permanent Secretary of the Singapore Ministry of the Environment, and members of the ISJCE, every success in their inaugural meeting.

8. On this note, it is now my pleasure and honour to declare open the First Meeting of the Indonesia-Singapore Joint Committee on the Environment.

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