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**SPEECH BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
AT THE BRICKWORKS TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL DINNER
HELD AT THE ORCHARD HOTEL ON 4 JULY 1992 AT 7.30 PM**

1. Since its formation in 1990, our Town Council has grown. About six months ago, we were joined by the former Pasir Panjang Town Council. With the merger, the new Brickworks Town Council has well over 40,000 residential units under its management and is one of the largest Town Councils in Singapore.
2. Tonight's Annual Dinner represents a special occasion for us to welcome our brothers and sisters from the former Pasir Panjang Town Council into the Brickworks family. I feel honoured and pleased to be part of this celebration.
3. Three weeks ago I led the Singapore delegation to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It was a monumental occasion involving 176 nations. I was told that it was the largest gathering of Heads of State or Government ever in the history of mankind. A total of 116 of them were present.
4. Many of you may have followed closely the media coverage of the Earth Summit. Some of you may have even asked: "What has all these global environmental issues got to do with us?" The answer is simple. There is only one Earth. Destroy it and we destroy ourselves. We need to join hands with the rest of the world to help protect it. In this respect, I am very glad that the Earth Summit succeeded in convincing world leaders that environmental protection cannot be viewed in total isolation from development. The two are inter-linked. The Summit also brought about an unprecedented scale of global solidarity with many countries from various political backgrounds agreeing with one another on most of the issues discussed at the Earth Summit. These are positive breakthroughs which attest to the success of the Earth Summit.
5. You may now ask: "If the environmental problems are global in nature, what can we as individuals do about them?" The answer is again simple. Think globally but act locally. In other words, let our everyday actions at home be environmentally-friendly. Stop polluting, stop littering and above all stop wasting. If the people in Singapore, together with the people of the rest of the world, can do all these, we would have helped to protect our global environment. This is the message which I would like all of you to bring to the Brickworks residents.
6. Only in partnership with all Singaporeans can the Ministry of the Environment (ENV) ensure that Singapore's environment remains good. They need your co-operation and assistance. ENV

will of course continue to find ways to improve the quality of the environment in Singapore and to safeguard the well-being of Singaporeans.

7. From 1 February 1993, ENV will impose a mandatory ruling to have paints containing lead compounds to be properly labelled. Scientific evidence has shown that exposure to excessive concentration of lead can harm our central nervous systems. Children are especially vulnerable. Most household paints do not contain lead. However it is still not possible to stop the use of lead in paints for special industrial applications. With the labelling scheme, members of the public will be greatly assisted in choosing the paints for their needs. They will be able to choose paints without lead or those with lower lead content if lead-free alternatives are not available. The Ministry will introduce two types of labels for paints containing lead compounds depending on the lead content in the paints.

8. From paints let me now talk about the issue of the illegal use of open spaces by food establishments. A recent newspaper article highlighted the problems caused by coffee shops obstructing side-walks and pavements with tables and chairs. Such practices are anti-social and inconsiderate. Not only are members of the public inconvenienced, they are also put at risk when they have to walk on the road to go round the obstructions.

9. Licensees of existing food or eating establishments with unauthorized outdoor refreshment areas are advised to seek approval for their extensions. Those who cannot comply with the licensing conditions will have to move back into the licensed premises immediately. I wish to remind licensees of food and eating establishments that the Ministry of the Environment will not tolerate illegal outdoor refreshment areas. Offenders will be prosecuted under the Environmental Public Health (Food Establishment) Regulations.

10. An outdoor refreshment area is allowed only if it is licensed as part and parcel of the licensed premises. To be licensed, the proprietor must satisfy all of the following conditions:

- a. He must obtain permission from the owner of the land or property upon which the refreshment area is proposed;
- b. The kitchen area is big enough to support the additional refreshment area. As a rule, the kitchen area must be at least 20% of the total floor area of the licensed premises;
- c. No noise nuisance is created to residents; and
- d. No littering or pollution takes place.

11. Brickworks Town Council has had a successful 1991. The success is due as much to the hardwork of the Councillors as to the continued support and selfless dedication of the Chairmen and members of the CCCs, RCs and CCMCs. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the residents of Brickworks and myself, to thank all of them for their valuable contributions.

12. With such a good team of able men and women serving Brickworks, I am confident that 1992 will be an even better year. It leaves me now to wish all of you an enjoyable Annual Dinner.

Enclosure - Press Release on Labelling of Paints

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Cc: INFORMATION5 (8812:GVT224)
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