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**SPEECH BY DR RICHARD HU, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE BOOK "MORE THAN A GARDEN CITY" ON
WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 1992 AT 11.30 AM AT MND PENTHOUSE**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Today is a rather special day for Parks and Recreation Department (PRD). We all know that the Department has been the prime mover behind landscaping public areas, planting and maintaining roadside trees, and building our public parks. But how many of us know the number and the variety of major parks that straddle our island, or where these are located?

2 This will no longer be a problem. "More than a Garden City", the book I am about to launch, records, with colourful photographs and short narration, the major parks in Singapore. Leafing through its pages will make its readers realise that Singapore's reputation as a Garden City is not misplaced.

3 The idea of making Singapore a Garden City was first mooted in 1957, and became an established policy in 1967. By the late Seventies, Singapore was covered with lush greenery, and our housing estates were boasting miniature gardens of their own. Now, of course, we have a myriad of parks catering to our social and recreational needs. These range from the Marina City Park, our latest urban park, to the Sungei Buloh Park, which has artfully integrated existing mangrove swamps, making it into an enriching experience for those who seek a piece of true nature.

4 In fact, we now have 337 parks and open spaces covering about 1,930 hectares. PRD is guardian to over 700,000 trees and

5.5 million shrubs and other plants. Last year alone, PRD planted more than 270,000 trees and shrubs.

5 Over the next five years, 13 more parks covering an area of 120 hectares will be built at a cost of approximately \$60 million. One park that will take pride of place is the new park to be developed in front of Istana. Gracing the Istana entrance, this will be Singapore's premier urban park, reflecting Singapore's tropical Garden City image. The park will incorporate a unique palm-lined pedestrian walkway which will skirt a large reflecting pool. When it is completed in 1994, it will be a major landmark in Singapore.

6 Also in the pipeline are two nature parks at Khatib Bongsu and Kranji marshes. And when PRD completes building the park network system, Singaporeans will be able to move from one park to another without having to leave the green environment.

7 It is heartening to see more and more Singaporeans, particularly our young, taking a keen interest in nature. This is evident from the increasing number of Singaporeans, both young and old, strolling in our parks, or going on nature walks in our Nature Reserves. This augurs well for our greening effort as it means that they will come to care for the plants and trees that surround them.

8 In fact, PRD has found this to be a reality. Last year, it introduced a scheme allowing residents in private housing estates to plant and maintain ornamental shrubs in the roadside green verges fronting their houses. Of the 1565 residents it

approached, one-third, or about 500 residents have participated in the scheme. PRD will encourage more residents to follow.

9 This growing willingness to care for plants and nature may also help PRD to cut down on its maintenance work. This is a sizeable amount. In FY 92 alone, PRD's maintenance bill for the parks and roadside greenery is estimated to cost more than \$31 million.

10 The release of the book "More than a Garden City", I am sure, will further heighten this interest among Singaporeans. Many will be pleasantly surprised by some of the parks featured in the book. Some may even wonder if these parks are really found in Singapore. To all of them, I would like to say, seeing is believing. Experience it for yourself.

11 It now gives me great pleasure to officially launch "More than a Garden City."

National Archives of Singapore

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Cc: INFORMATION5 (8812:GVT224)
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