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SPEECH BY ENCIK MOHAMAD MAIDIN BIN PACKER MOHD, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (EDUCATION)
AND

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR MARINE PARADE GRC AT THE

1ST ANNIVERSARY DINNER OF KAMPONG UBI BALAM GREEN RESIDENTS' COMMITTEE SENIOR
CITIZENS' CLUB AT 8.00 PM

ON SATURDAY, 26 JUNE 1999 AT BLOCK 31, BALAM ROAD AMPHITHEATRETT

Mr Lee Leng San
Chairman of Kampong Ubi Balam Green RC

Senior Citizens' Executive Committee

Mr Johnny Yeo

Chairman of the Dinner Working Committee

Grassroots Leaders

Members of the Senior Citizens' Club

Residents

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to be with you at this dinner to celebrate the 1st Anniversary of Kampong Ubi Balam Green RC Senior Citizens' Club (SCC).

Balam Green RC Senior Citizens' Club was formed in June 1998. Since then, the Club has done much in helping the senior citizens lead an active, healthy and meaningful life. It organises many activities and services such as local excursions, keep-fit exercises, health screening and Chinese opera appreciation. The senior citizens' corner at Block 33 has become the focal point for social activities for the senior citizens. They frequently gather at the corner to socialise over cups of Chinese tea or coffee. The Club has also formed 10 Mutual Help and Care Groups to promote mutual help and care among the senior citizens especially in time of need or distress. I commend the Chairman, Mr Lee Leng San and his committee members on their dedication, hardwork and success in serving the senior citizens.

Balam Green RC Senior Citizens' Club is part of the People's Association (PA) Senior Citizens' Movement. The Movement has a membership of 150,000 which is about 68% of the elderly population in Singapore. They belong to 396 SCCs under the Citizens' Consultative Committees, Community Centres/Clubs and Residents' Committees.

In six months' time, we will enter the next millennium. One challenge in the new era is how to take care of the rapidly ageing population in Singapore. Singapore has one of the fastest ageing populations in the world. In 1997, the number of elderly Singaporeans aged 65 years and above totalled 217,000 which is about 7% of the population. By 2030, they are expected to reach 800,000 or 18.4% of the population.

The PA and its Senior Citizens' Movement will have to deploy more resources to cater to the growing social and recreational needs of these senior citizens. What the PA and its Senior Citizens' Movement will do over the next five to ten years will include the following:

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- (a) continue to organise more and better courses and activities to help senior citizens lead an active, healthy and meaningful life in the family and community for as long as possible;
 - (b) form more SCCs and recruit more members, especially the better-educated ones. This will ensure that the PA Senior Citizens' Movement will continue to touch base with the growing number of senior citizens;
 - (c) work closely with the National Computer Board and other IT organisations to promote Internet and computer courses among the senior citizens. The emphasis on the continuing education for senior citizens is in line with the Government's encouragement of citizens to seize every opportunity to live and learn regardless of age;

(d) promote greater volunteerism among the elderly. As at 31 May 1999, about 4,200 senior citizens are serving in the Senior Citizens' Executive Committees. Eighteen SCCs are providing regular meal service for the needy senior citizens. In line with the Singapore 21 vision of promoting active citizenship, the PA and its Senior Citizens' Movement will work closely with the Ministry of Community Development and National Council of Social Service to develop a larger pool of senior citizens who can volunteer their services to the society at large; and

(e) continue to promote the Mutual Help Scheme among the SCCs. There are now 2,750 Mutual Help and Care Groups with about 26,400 members at 216 SCCs. These groups organise regular social activities for their members to socialise so that they would feel free to turn to one another for help in time of need or distress.

These are positive steps which will enable the PA Senior Citizens' Movement to continue to live up to its mission of making the life great for the senior citizens. I am sure that the Kampong Ubi Balam Green RC Senior Citizens' Club will have a significant role to play in fulfilling the future tasks of the PA Senior Citizens' Movement.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chairman and members of Kampong Ubi Balam Green RC Senior Citizens' Club once again for their past contributions. I wish them continued success in the years ahead. Have an enjoyable evening.

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