Singapore Government
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ADDRESS BY MR TEH CHEANG WAN, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON AIRPORT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE SHANGRI-LA HOTEL ON MONDAY, 11 JANUARY 1982 at 9 AM

The development of Singapore's Changi Airport is unique in many ways. Firstly, the airport was completed in only six years from the day the decision was made to relocate the international airport to Changi. At that time, more than half the site now occupied by the airport, was under sea water. A considerable area of the land required for development was privately owned and had to be acquired. The infrastructure needed to support an international airport was almost non-existent. It was necessary to build a new and comprehensive expressway system to provide rapid linkage of the airport with the city and population centres.

The development of Changi Airport, therefore, required extensive reclamation, consolidation of the reclaimed land, acquisition of private land for airport and road development and large scale resettlement of affected families, businesses and industries. It was fortunate that over the last 20 years, we had evolved a very efficient system of land acquisition and clearance. This permitted us to speedily acquire and possess land needed for public purposes. The extensive development of public housing made it possible for families and businesses to be relocated without much fuss and argument. Despite these advantages, the accomplishment of land reclamation, acquisition and clearance, and the construction of the airport and infrastructure all within six years, is indeed a major achievement.

Site clearance and earthworks for the extension of the old military runway at Changi began almost immediately upon approval of the project. Mountains were literally moved for the runway extension which involved the excavation of 12 million cubic metres of earth. Work also proceeded immediately to reclaim land for the construction

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of the Passenger Terminal Building, aircraft parking bays and the second runway. The bulk of the reclamation was undertaken by the Port of Singapore Authority.

On another front, the Public Works Department started to develop the transportation link between the airport and the rest of the island. The PWD has already drawn up a comprehensive plan for an island-wide network of expressways. It accelerated the construction of those sections that led to the airport. Today, Changi Airport is served by two high-capacity highways, the Pan-Island Expressway and East Coast Parkway which, together with a series of efficient interchanges, make the airport no further than a half-hour ride from the Central Business District.

By 1976, the PWD had finalised the Airport Master Plan. The designing of the Passenger Terminal Building commenced. The PWD also began the complex task of planning and co-ordinating the provision of utility services needed in a modern airport, ranging from water and power to communications and fuel.

The airport development entailed the design and construction of numerous facilities. The airfield was a major component with a 4,000-metre runway and parallel taxiway, 45 aircraft parking aprons, and an airfield drainage system which included two reservoirs for industrial water. The other main component was the Passenger Terminal Building. This building took four years to complete - an outstanding achievement for a project of such size and complexity.

There were notable engineering achievements as well. Much of the airfield is situated on reclaimed land with poor sub-soil conditions. To accelerate consolidation, the ground had to be specially treated. The vertical drain method of soil consolidation, never before attempted in Singapore on such an extensive scale, was employed in most of the problem areas. The art of vertical drain installation became well-developed from the experience in Changi.

The Control 3/-

The Control Tower is now a familiar landmark in Singapore. Few people are aware of the great care taken to select a design that truly befits its position at the gateway to Changi Airport. The construction of the tower marked another unique achievement. Normally, the cabin would have been constructed at its final position 20 storeys up in the air, a slow and dangerous method. To save time and increase safety, the cabin was erected at ground level and jacked up to its final position.

Ultimately, however, it was team work which enabled Changi Airport to be completed on schedule. The project required the concerted and co-ordinated effort of many government departments, statutory boards and private corporations. Practically all the government agencies were involved one way or another. Major roles were played by the Ministry of Communications, the Department of Civil Aviation, the Port of Singapore Authority, the Telecommunications Authority of Singapore, and last but certainly not least, the Public Works Department. The team work displayed by all concerned made it possible for the airport to be completed in time for Singapore to receive President Chun Doo Hwan of the Republic of Korea on 1 July 1981, the first day of the new airport's operation. Changi Airport is one of the achievements which Singaporeans can truly be proud of.

I am happy that the Singapore Government is hosting this symposium to enable us to share our experience in the planning, design and construction of Changi Airport with our colleagues in this field from all over the world. It is my hope that in the short duration of two days, all participants will be able to benefit from the exchange of views and experiences.

It gives me great pleasure to declare this symposium open.
