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**SPEECH BY HE MR TAN SOO KHOON, SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT
REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF
H E MR AKBAR TANDJUNG, SPEAKER, HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA
AT DINNER ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2000 AT
FOUR SEASONS HOTEL, 8.00 PM**

National Archives of Singapore

Your Excellency, Bapak Akbar Tandjung
Speaker, House of Representatives, Republic of Indonesia,
Ibu Krisnina,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1 It gives me great pleasure to welcome Your Excellency and Ibu to Singapore. I am glad that you were able to make time to visit us despite your busy schedule in Jakarta.

2 Singapore and Indonesia enjoy warm and friendly ties. The foundations of our relationship are strong and have withstood the test of time. We have co-operated for mutual benefit for many years. Our friendly relationship has enabled us to establish strong institutional links for the mutual benefit of our countries and people.

3 The frequent exchange of visits by the leaders of Indonesia and Singapore is a symbol of the strong bilateral relations. President Abdurrahman Wahid's decision to make Singapore his first stop in his ASEAN tour in November 1999 underscores the importance he places on relations with Singapore, and the return visit by the Prime Minister just two months later in January this year continued the process of further strengthening bilateral relations. In June 2000, Vice President Megawati Soekarnoputri made a working visit to Singapore. Your Excellency's visit is another demonstration of the diversity and depth of institutional ties between our two countries.

4 Despite the economic crisis, Singapore was the third largest foreign investor in Indonesia in 1999 with about US\$21 billion worth of cumulative investments. The first half of this year saw Singapore recorded as the second largest investor in Indonesia with investments of about US\$200 million. Singapore is also a base for marketing Indonesian products. In 1999, Singapore accounted for about 10% of Indonesia's products marketed overseas, and together with Japan and the US, formed Indonesia's top three markets. Even during difficult times, Singapore did not lose confidence in Indonesia. The conclusion of the West Natuna Gas project and the Pertamina-Singapore Power agreement reflects Singapore's faith and long-term confidence in Indonesia.

5 Our contacts at the people-to-people level are also strong and growing. Singapore has also worked closely with Indonesia in the area of human resource development. Since the establishment of the Singapore Co-operation Programme (SCP) in 1992, more than 1,200 Indonesian officials have been trained in Singapore. Courses such as English Language training, Maritime Law and Aviation Accident Management have been specially designed to meet the specific needs of Indonesia. Seven Indonesian students

have been awarded the Singapore Scholarship to study at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in academic year 2000. Among the inaugural batch of scholars in 1999, two Indonesian scholars achieved outstanding performance and were offered the Accelerated Master's Programme by the NTU. In addition, 10 Indonesian students have been selected to participate in the Singapore International Foundation-ASEAN Visiting Student Fellowship (SAVSF) this year. The SAVSF was established in 1992 to provide university students from ASEAN countries with leadership potential the opportunity to attend a term at the NUS or NTU. To-date, 83 Indonesian students have participated in this programme.

6 Singapore and Indonesia also enjoy strong and friendly defence relations. Interactions between the two armed forces have continued despite the challenges posed by the economic crisis, a clear demonstration of the strength and resilience of the relationship. The good defence ties are reflective of the strong institutional relations that Indonesia and Singapore have built over many years of co-operation.

7 Aside from good bilateral co-operation in many fields, Singapore and Indonesia have also co-operated closely in various regional and international fora. ASEAN is the key institution that enables both countries to maintain close ties through a high degree of co-operation on regional and multilateral issues. The years ahead will pose new challenges for ASEAN. Singapore will continue to work closely with Indonesia to contribute to the stability and well being of ASEAN, and to ensure that ASEAN plays an important role in the region and in international fora such as APEC, ASEM and the WTO.

Your Excellency,

8 I am certain that in the coming years, our two countries will continue to actively seek out new ways to further strengthen our bilateral ties and multi-lateral co-operation. We have a vested interest in Indonesia's stability, growth and prosperity. Indonesia has a strategic presence in the region and its continued stability is important to both Singapore and the region. As a close neighbour and partner, Singapore will continue to work closely with Indonesia to further strengthen our relations and work towards our common interest of ensuring

continued regional peace, stability and prosperity.

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