

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR YEO CHEOW TONG, MINISTER OF STATE
(FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND HEALTH), AT THE OFFICIAL PRESENTATION
OF THE KOMODO DRAGONS AT THE SINGAPORE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS
ON TUESDAY, 5 AUGUST 1986 AT 9.00 AM**

It gives me great pleasure to accept on behalf of Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, and the people of Singapore this gift of two Komodo dragons for the Singapore Zoological Gardens from President Soeharto and the people of the Republic of Indonesia.

Komodo dragons are extremely rare and are protected by law. They cannot be taken out of Indonesia except as a gift from the President of the Republic of Indonesia. We are most honoured to be presented with such an unique gift from Indonesia. We deeply appreciate this gesture of the President and the people of the Republic of Indonesia in sharing with Singapore, what is regarded as a national treasure. The Komodo dragons are only found in the island of Komodo, from which they derived their name, and three others in the Sunda chain.

With this gift, the Singapore Zoological Gardens will be the ninth zoo, outside Indonesia, to be bestowed with Komodo dragons by the President and the people of Indonesia. This bears tetimony to the Singapore Zoo's fine reputation as a world-class zoo. It will help the Zoo in achieving its objective of adding new attractions to enhance the enjoyment of the Zoo by Singaporeans and tourists. The gift will also increase the knowledge of the people of Singapore about the varied fauna found in this region.

We Singaporeans look on this special gift as an expression of the close friendship that exists between our two leaders. We also look on it as yet another symbol of the close and warm relationship existing between our two countries.

May I, on behalf of the Prime Minister and the people of Singapore, thank President Soeharto and the people of the Republic of Indonesia for their gift of the two Komodo dragons.

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