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**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND MINISTER FOR LAW
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE,
PROFESSOR S. JAYAKUMAR
AT THE LAUNCH OF CONTACT SINGAPORE IN LONDON
AT 5.30 PM, THE GLOUCESTER HOTEL NOVEMBER 12 1997**

I'm very happy to be here in London – a truly global city whose current economic boom is moving it from being one of the great capital cities of the world to one of the world's most successful economies in its own right.

One of your city's leading forecasters, the Centre for Economics and Business Research, predicts that the London economy will have risen by an impressive 30 per cent by the end of this decade. London's GDP of US\$236 billion places it eighth in a league table of 23 European countries, with an economy larger than that of Sweden, Denmark or Finland.

London has always been a trend-setting city. You have for a long time been a leader in the fields of business and industry, education and the arts.

Unlike London, we in Singapore do not have centuries of history and tradition behind us. Singapore is a young country of 32 years. But youth has its advantages. It endows us with energy and drive, an eagerness to learn and absorb from the world, and the determination to achieve the goals we set for ourselves.

Our immigrant background and multi-cultural and multi-religious society have also equipped us with an open mind and willingness to embrace people of different races and creeds from all over the world, so that we can learn from each other and enrich each other's cultures and lives.

Like London, we want to be a truly open and global city, where Europeans, Americans, Asians and others work alongside each other to create one of the most cosmopolitan, most exciting, and, to borrow a terminology from the young, one of the most "happening" cities on earth.

One way to achieve this is to send our students out to learn from other countries. Singapore has, for many years, been sending her top students to British universities. Many of our leaders, in industry and government, have benefited from and hold fond memories of their student days in the UK. At the moment, there are over 5,000 Singaporean students studying in Britain - the country with the 2nd highest concentration of Singapore students overseas.

The other way for Singapore to become a global city is to invite the world to come to Singapore, by welcoming foreigners to work and live in

our city state. They can work with Singaporeans in specialised fields or even pioneer new areas of work.

This evening, Singapore wants to extend a special invitation to all professionals based here in London and the rest of Britain, whether you are European, American, Asian or others to come to Singapore to work and take advantage of the opportunities Asia offers. I would also like to take this opportunity to invite Singaporean professionals and students here in Britain to come back to Singapore to take up the many exciting career opportunities available. Singapore needs you to make up that critical core of talent which will propel Singapore into the 21st century.

In many ways, Singapore is the most natural destination for young British professionals who want to enrich themselves by working in exotic Asia. Singapore is the interface between the East and West and is the ideal city for you to make your transition into Asia. It combines the best and the latest of Western living conveniences, world-class infrastructure and Eastern cultures, languages, customs and traditions.

As you all know, Singapore was a former colony of Great Britain. Singapore gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1963. There was no acrimony, no rancour. We still retain many of our links with the United Kingdom. Our civil service, legal and educational systems are all adapted from the British model and have served us well.

Today, the close ties between Singapore and the United Kingdom are even stronger. The UK is Singapore's 2nd largest trading partner in

the EU and 10th largest trading partner overall. It is the 4th largest investor in Singapore after the US, Japan and the Netherlands. There are about 700 British companies in Singapore and top British companies such as British Petroleum, Glaxo-Wellcome, British Telecom, Rolls Royce, and Standard Chartered are represented in Singapore.

The young British professional who comes to Singapore will not be lost. On the contrary, he may actually feel quite at home. There is a large British expatriate community numbering about 10,000 living and working in Singapore. Those who have worked in London will definitely find Singapore an easy city to live in. Our long historical links with Britain have entrenched English as the main medium for work and education.

Singapore also has a lot to offer to Singaporeans who are working and studying here, as well as others who are looking for opportunities to work in Asia. We are home to more than 5,000 multinational corporations, many of them using Singapore as their regional headquarters to run multi-million dollar operations in Singapore and the region. Singapore offers a wide range of career opportunities in a diverse range of industries - in civil and structural engineering, wireless communications, wafer fabrication, information technology, research and development, media production and broadcasting, arts and healthcare, just to name a few.

But it is not all work and no play. Singapore is proud to boast a good quality of life. Last year, Fortune Magazine rated Singapore third in its ranking of the world's list of cities for easy and pleasant living, after

Toronto and London, but ahead of Paris and Hong Kong.

Our fast-emerging arts and culture scene, with its theatre, dance, music and fine art, offers many exciting opportunities for the artistically-inclined. A few Singaporeans, such as Glen Goei, who have made a name for themselves in London, have returned to Singapore to explore new possibilities in our flourishing arts arena.

Ladies and gentlemen

With this objective in mind, we are here tonight to launch Singapore's new global initiative to help professionals and overseas Singaporeans to work or study in Singapore. Called CONTACT SINGAPORE, this initiative will facilitate the infusion of foreign talents to add to the richness and diversity of our city state. Foreign professionals will give the boost to Singapore's goal of achieving its vision for the next millennium - to be a booming business, industrial and cultural hub in Asia, and a truly cosmopolitan and global city, just like London.

CONTACT SINGAPORE London, located in Regent Street, is an information and resource centre created to assist foreign professionals and overseas Singaporeans to seek out new career and educational opportunities in Singapore. The London centre forms part of a worldwide network of six centres. The other five are in Sydney, Perth, Boston, Los Angeles, and Vancouver.

We recognise that with globalisation comes increased mobility for

talented people to move to wherever their skills take them, wherever they are most needed and well rewarded. CONTACT SINGAPORE aims to tap into this flow of talent, to help professionals find their niche in Singapore.

London and Singapore go back a long way by virtue of our shared histories. Over the years, our two cities have developed very close ties in terms of trade, investments, education, defence and culture. The launch of the CONTACT SINGAPORE initiative in London provides yet another avenue to deepen the close ties between our cities.

We want Singapore to become as vibrant, exciting, and attractive as London. Just as London has been called the "Golden City" of Europe, Singapore aspires to be the "Golden City" of Asia in the next millennium. Come and join us as we reach towards this goal.

Thank you.
