

# *Singapore Government*

## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 140 Hill Street #02-02 MITA Building  
Singapore 179369. Tel: 837 9666

---

### **EMBARGO INSTRUCTIONS**

The attached press release/speech is **EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY**.  
Please check against delivery.  
For assistance call 837 9666

---

**SPRInter 4.0**, Singapore's Press Releases on the Internet, is located at:  
<http://www.gov.sg/sprinter/>

---

**Embargoed till after delivery**  
**Please check against delivery**

**SPEECH BY MR LIM SWEE SAY  
ACTING MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF  
TUAS SOUTH INCINERATION PLANT, 98 TUAS SOUTH AVE 3 ON 25  
NOV 2000 AT 11.30 AM**

1. Every day, our public and industries produce about 7,700 tonnes of waste. The Ministry of the Environment makes sure that all wastes are collected daily. We incinerate all those that can be burnt, and landfill the ashes together with those that cannot be burnt. This is the best possible technical solution we can come up with. It has worked well for us, and it has enabled Singaporeans to enjoy a clean and green living environment all these years.

2. However, it is worth pointing out that the amount of waste that we produce everyday has been on the increase. It has tripled from 2,600 tonnes per day in 1980 to 7,700 tonnes per day in 1999. It is increasing at a rate of 5% a year. If we

allow this trend to continue, it will increase to a staggering 12,500 tonnes per day within 10 years. We will then need to build one new incineration plant every 5 years. This is why as we officially open Tuas South Incineration Plant or TSIP today, we are already planning for the fifth incineration plant to come on stream by 2006. By the year 2030, we will need 10 incineration plants to dispose of our daily waste. As each plant takes up about 7 ha of land and costs almost \$1 billion to build, it may not be the best use of our limited land and resources.

3. Besides allocating more land and financial resources to building more incineration plants, we also need to allocate more landfill space for the ashes and waste that cannot be burnt. We have already run out of landfill space on mainland Singapore. The last landfill at Lorong Halus was completely filled up in April last year. We are now using the offshore landfill at Pulau Semakau. At the current rate of waste generation, we will need to allocate landfill space about the size of Sentosa Island, at a rate of one every 30 years!

4. Hence, instead of allowing the current trend in waste generation to continue, we need to come up with new and better ways of managing the increasing amount of waste. Our economy will continue to grow and our society is becoming more affluent. We need to increase public awareness on the challenges we face in waste management, and work together to slow down the rate of increase of waste generation, while at the same time enhance the productivity and efficiency level of waste disposal.

5. We can slow down the rate of increase of waste generation by doing more recycling. For every tonne of waste we recycle, it means one tonne less of waste to be disposed of. Currently, we recycle about 40% of the total amount of waste

we generate. However, much of these recycling efforts take place in the industrial sector. We can do much more in the domestic and commercial sectors. Starting from 2001, waste collectors appointed by ENV for the collection of domestic refuse will have to undertake waste recycling. For this programme to be effective, we need the support and co-operation of the public. In Germany, they recycle glass, paper, cardboard, plastics, tins, aluminium and composites, and achieve about 78 kg of recycled waste per person per year. If we can do the same, this will work out to about 310,000 tonnes of recycled waste per year, 850 tonnes of recycled waste per day, or some 11% of our total daily waste output. Imagine how much benefit this will bring to our environment, and how much that we could save in terms of land and capital resources.

6. We also need to improve the productivity and efficiency level of our waste disposal operations. Instead of subsidising the cost of waste disposal which will discourage waste recycling and encourage more waste generation, we will privatise existing incineration plants and introduce competition in refuse collection and waste incineration. This is the best way to ensure that waste disposal fees will be competitive, while at the same time reflect the real cost of waste disposal to encourage waste recycling and waste minimisation.

7. The process of restructuring for waste collection and incineration industries in Singapore is well underway. We opened up our domestic waste collection sector to competition in 1999. Since then, collection fees have come down and the quality of services has gone up. These have benefited the public. We are on schedule to complete the award of waste collection contracts for all the nine sectors throughout Singapore by the end of this year.

8. Our next move is to privatise the waste incineration industry. We are taking steps to bring competition into the market so as to remove any inefficiency resulting from monopolised operations.

9. Under the open market model, incineration plants will be owned and operated by the private sector. These private sector operators will have to compete for waste collectors and generators who can decide which plant they want to send their waste for incineration.

10. In moving towards the market model, the 5th incineration plant coming on stream in 2006, will be developed by the private sector on a Design, Build, Own, and Operate basis, or DBOO in short. Of the existing four incineration plants, we will be closing down one as it is nearing the end of its economic lifespan. Two of the plants will be privatised by 2005 so that by the time the 5th plant commences operation, about 70% of the incineration capacity will be in the hands of the private sector. A corporatised company under ENV will operate one plant that takes care of the remaining 30% of the incineration capacity.

11. ENV will focus on its role as an industry regulator to ensure that the industry meets minimum service and environmental standards. It will also time the development of future plants to ensure that there will be sufficient capacity in the market to meet increasing demands. We believe that by subjecting the industry to competition, we can bring out the best in the operators as they compete and innovate for greater operational efficiency.

12. ENV will retain ownership and control of landfill as there is no room for market competition. Due to the scarcity of land, our top priority is to conserve the

use of our limited landfill space. As a policy, we will accept only non-incinerable waste at our landfill. We will charge appropriate fees to reflect the real and opportunity cost of landfill operations.

13. In conclusion, I would like to stress that as a city state, there is a limit to our long term capacity in waste disposal. We must do our best to minimise the generation of waste, and maximise the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste. With the support and co-operation of our public and industries, I am hopeful that we can succeed in sustaining Singapore as one of the most environmentally friendly nations in the world for a long, long time to come.

14. It leaves me now to thank all our partners for their contribution to the successful completion of the Tuas South Incineration Plant. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise the fine efforts put in by the management and staff in my Ministry in the planning, development and operation of this plant. I am told that with a capacity of 3,000 tonnes per day, the Tuas South Incineration Plant is the biggest incineration plant in the world today. Congratulations to all for your fine effort and achievement. Thank you.

National Archives of Singapore