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**SPEECH BY SENIOR MINISTER, MR LEE KUAN YEW,
AT THE ZOO'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER
ON SATURDAY, 19 JUNE 1993 AT 8.15 PM**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I have made many visits to this Zoo in the last 20 years. I keep coming back with my children and now my grandchildren because of continual improvements and new exhibits since 1973.

2 Most important has been the air of good maintenance: better greenery, new footpaths, more facilities like food and drinks centres, benches and air-con shelters. There is none of the sense of neglect and disrepair which makes some zoos a depressing experience.

3 This Zoo meets the needs of our population, highly urbanised, for an open air recreational facility. It has attracted children. The Children's World has a well thought-out design with a back-to-nature setting and modern play equipment. Parents and grandparents bring children to the Zoo making it a family outing.

4 The Zoo linked up with the schools in 1976. Its Schools Friends of the Zoo scheme now has an enrolment of 560 schools, including all primary schools. Its regular programmes of talks, slideshows, tours and exhibitions are well-received. The Zoo seeks to be an extension of the classroom. Over 100,000 school children visit the Zoo annually. The schools should organise more visits. Zoo-Ed magazine, a popular educational magazine sold 197,000 copies last year, making it Singapore's largest circulating children's magazine.

5 In the last three years, the Zoo has won the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board's Best Leisure Attraction of the Year award. About half a million tourists visit the Zoo annually, the result of hard work in innovative marketing, promotional efforts, and professionalism of the staff.

6 Government and public support has enabled it to add new attractions and facilities. The Zoo has been able to break-even in its operational costs, in three years out of the past four. I hope more companies will participate in the Adoption and Friends of the Zoo schemes. They provide 16% of total revenue. This Zoo must keep up its high quality of maintenance and keep on improving.

7 I congratulate all who have made the Zoo what it is, a social asset.
