

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR LAW,  
MR. E. W. BARKER, AT THE HOUSING & DEVELOP-  
MENT BOARD ON JUNE 15, AT 10.45 A.M.

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The success of our Housing programme over the last 6 years has enabled some 400,000 people to be accommodated in modern housing estates and rendered many of the older areas of the City ripe for redevelopment. The Government has over the last few years been thinking and planning in terms of redeveloping these areas to achieve better utilisation of our very scarce land resources. Urban renewal and redevelopment plans for the two pilot precincts of N1 (Crawford) and S1 (Outram) have been drawn up and are now being implemented. Already much of the land in these two precincts has been cleared and new blocks of buildings are now being constructed in accordance with a properly phased urban renewal programme.

The Government, however, would like to see maximum private participation in our urban redevelopment efforts in order to have the full support of the population in this massive and long-term reconstruction work.

In order to encourage private development tax concessions were recently approved for development projects in some 20 designated areas in the City. These provide for exemption of property tax on vacant land during the period of construction and reduction of assessment rates from 36% to 12% over a period of 20 years on completion of the project.

But tax concessions alone will not bring about development if the landlord or the owner of the land cannot obtain vacant possession from stubborn tenants. Many a tenant has taken advantage of the provisions of the Control of Rent Ordinance to demand huge sums as compensation for vacant possession. Just one stubborn tenant can prevent an owner developing a large piece of land. The Government is therefore considering the introduction of new legislation to establish a tribunal to fix the amount of compensation to be paid by a landlord to a tenant where the landlord wishes to recover possession of his land for redevelopment purposes in certain designated areas.

Action has already been taken in the urban renewal precincts to clear sites, re-plan the whole area on a comprehensive basis and in accordance with these plans set aside parcels of land for development by the private sector. As a first step to promote active participation not only <sup>from</sup> Singapore but also from abroad. Tenders will be invited from the public to take part in the development of 14 projects on State lands which will be sold on lease to successful tenderers. Private participation will be invited for the development of hotels, shopping centres, restaurants and apartments. Four of these projects are in the Kallang Park area, 3 in the "Golden Mile" area and 6 in the urban renewal precinct S1 (Outram area) and the last in the Collyer Quay area. All the sites selected have been re-parcelled, and the necessary traffic improvements and essential services will be provided. The sites will be

cleared of encumbrances and vacant possession given to the successful tenderers within 3 months of the date of building approval.

The successful tenderer will not be required to pay the full cost of the land, but only 20% and the balance will be allowed to be paid in instalments over a period of 10 years free of interest. This will mean that the successful tenderer will not have to tie down a big amount of his capital in the purchase of land. For these projects, the recently announced property tax concessions will apply. Provided the response from private developers is encouraging, new sites will be made available in the future.

The 14 areas now set aside for private participation are illustrated in brochures specially prepared by the Urban Renewal Department and those interested can purchase a "Developer's Packet" setting out the full details and necessary information to enable them to tender for the sites. Much time and effort has gone into the preparation of the plans and a charge of \$100/- per "Developer's Packet" will be levied. Models showing the Architects impression of every development project can be inspected. The Architects and Designers of the Urban Renewal Department will also be on hand to explain to every interested developer and to give him full information as to what is intended for each particular project. The plans and specifications set out are minimum scale developments which the urban renewal planners consider suitable in the particular lots of land now offered for tender.

Private developers can suggest and tender for amended or larger projects. Each tender will be carefully scrutinised and evaluated by a team of officials and the final acceptance by the Government will depend not only upon the premium offered but also on the capital investment involved, the employment generated and the revenue potential, as well as the architectural merits.

JUNE 15, 1967.

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