SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT MC/AUG/90/73 (Defence)

Speech by Dr Goh Keng Swee, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence at the Opening of the 7th SEAP Games Village in Toa Payoh on 30 August 1973 at 5.00 p.m.

May I extend a very warm welcome to officials and participants at the 7th SEAP Games. It is also my hope that the many supporters from abroad coming here to encourage their countries' teams will also enjoy their stay in Singapore.

This is Singapore's first opportunity to host the SEAP Games since its inauguration in Thailand in 1958. Although the Republic was selected as the venue for the 6th SEAP Games in 1971, we had to decline the honour because our sports facilities were then inadequate. Meanwhile these have improved; we built the National Stadium Complex at Kallang and the Stadium was declared open earlier this year.

In the next week or two, the SEAP Games will stimulate much public interest, not only in Singapore, but also in the other SEAP countries where sports have a large following. No doubt, we shall see old records smashed and new standards established. New friendships amongst athletes will emerge during this series of Games as they did previously and this is all to the good.

At international sports gatherings of this kind, participating athletes are housed in a Games Village. Why the word "village" is used, I do not know. I suspect the practice originated, or was believed to have originated, in the times of ancient Greece when many people lived in villages. I suspect also that Games Village in recent

Olympics and other international meetings have very little rustic content. Certainly, here in Singapore, where the Games Village is sited in one of Singapore's newest satellite towns, one is hard put to it to detect anything bucolic in the environment of the village.

It is probably as well that this is so. In our part of the world, villages are associated with nasty things like mosquitoes, insects, snakes and centipedes, quite apart from the likely absence of creature comforts such as running water, modern sanitation, electric power and air conditioning.

However, as you can see for yourselves, and as the tree planting ceremony is intended to symbolise, this satellite town is not really a concrete jungle.

Whatever the merits and demerits of town and countryside may be, either in theory or in practice, I hope that all participants, athletes as well as officials, who live in the Games Village for the duration of the SEAP Games, will find their temporary lodgings convenient and comfortable. May they all be in good trim so that they can perform well in the Games.

In conclusion, may I congratulate the SEAP Games Organising Committee and the other sub-committees for the work that they have done. It only remains for us to hope that the weather god will be as appreciative of their efforts as we are, so that the events of the SEAP Games may carry on without disturbances from the monsoons. Finally, may I express to all overseas visitors not only our hearty welcome on this occasion but also our sincere wish to see them again as friends and as visitors.

It is now my pleasure to declare open the SEAP Games Village.
