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**SPEECH BY MR CH'NG JIT KOON, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
TO THE PRIME MINISTER, AT THE DONATION DINNER IN AID OF  
THE SHELTERED WORKSHOP EXPANSION PROJECT  
AT THE SILVER STAR THEATRE RESTAURANT & NITE CLUB  
ON FRIDAY, 8 JULY 1983 AT 7.30 PM**

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It is indeed my pleasure to be here at tonight's Donation Dinner organised jointly by the Lions Club of Singapore Mandarin, Lianhe Wanbao and the Society for Aid to the Paralysed. I am happy to note that the proceeds of tonight's function will go to the Sheltered Workshop Expansion Project of the Society for Aid to the Paralysed.

The Society for Aid to the Paralysed has come a long way since its inception in 1964. The Society's objective is to help the physically disabled to help themselves. Starting with only a sheltered workshop, the Society has grown to a well-established charitable organisation with a full range of services for the physically disabled. It runs a transport scheme for those who face problems in commuting to and from the workshop, provides welfare and home-bound services for members who are unable to go outside their homes, organises sports, social and cultural activities for members and even administers an Education Awards Fund to promote education or vocational training among members.

The most notable among the varied services provided by the Society is the Sheltered Workshop at Peng Nguan Street, which has become synonymous with the Society.

Established officially in 1967, the Workshop began as a modest carpentry workshop where the workers were mainly engaged in repairing wooden crates for a local soft drink manufacturer. The initial years were beset with teething problems and the workshop suffered substantial losses. However, under the able leadership of the management committee and with the dedication of the workers, the workshop grew slowly but surely, from a financial loss to a growing concern since 1979. Today the Sheltered Workshop stands as an economically viable and well-reputed enterprise for the physically disabled. The types of work offered in the Workshop have increased from repairing wooden crates to contract work with other companies such as Matsushita, Singapore Kami Electronics Pte Ltd, Setsco, Shimano (S) Pte Ltd and Hewlett Packard.

Through offering employment to the physically disabled, the Sheltered Workshop has contributed significantly to their integration into the community. For many physically disabled persons, it is the first time they are gainfully employed. Yet for others, the Workshop is a realisation of their long cherished dream to become economically independent and self-supporting. More importantly, it serves as an essential training ground for many. Records showed that till 1981, 300 out of the 350 disabled persons who had been trained in the Workshop have been absorbed by the open job market.

To meet the rapid changes in technology and the demand for higher vocational skills in the employment market, the Society for Aid to the Paralysed had seen the need to expand its workshop facilities to provide a wider and more sophisticated range of training and job opportunities for the physically disabled. Hence, its plan to construct a four-storey workshop complex. The expansion of the Workshop is also motivated by the

increasing number of disabled members registering with the Society for employment and training. The new workshop complex will comprise a modern Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the disabled, a workshop providing higher value-added type of work and an indoor gymnasium for the disabled. The Society also hopes to be able to accommodate trainees from the Spastic Children's Association, in future.

More people are now aware that the disabled need not be a subject of pity and sympathy. They want to be self-reliant and contributive citizens like anyone else. The expansion of the Sheltered Workshop by the Society for Aid to the Paralysed therefore deserves the support of all civic-conscious persons.

I am very encouraged by the overwhelming support from all of you here tonight and other members of the public towards this Workshop Expansion Project. I would like in particular, to commend the Society for Aid to the Paralysed for its far-sighted planning to cater for the needs of the disabled, the Lions Club of Singapore Mandarin and Lianhe Wanbao for their efforts in organising this function. Finally, I wish all a pleasant evening.

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