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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Chan Soo Sen, 3 Jun 2000, 11.00 am

# *Singapore Government*

## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

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**SPEECH BY MR CHAN SOO SEN, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(PRIME MINISTER' S OFFICE & MINISTRY OF HEALTH), AT THE  
OPENING CEREMONY OF CITY HARVEST COMMUNITY SERVICES  
ASSOCIATION'S YOUTH CENTRE ON SATURDAY, 3 JUN 2000 AT  
11.00 AM AT 357 JOO CHIAT ROAD**

Rev Kong Hee  
President, Management Committee  
City Harvest Community Services Association (CHCSA)  
Members of the Management Committee, CHCSA

Staff and Volunteers of CHCSA

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very happy to join you here today to officially open the City Harvest Community Services Association Youth Centre. This is an important milestone in City Harvest' s work amongst our youths. I would also like to congratulate

you for your achievements.

2 One and a half years ago, I was at the Grand Opening of your new office at Joo Chiat Road. I was very impressed by the enthusiasm and team spirit of your members, many of whom very young. A few months later, Joo Chiat Civil Defence Executive Committee approached you to jointly organise a blood donation campaign. You mobilised so many donors that the Blood Transfusion Service was kept busy throughout the day, overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response. There is no doubt you have the potential to do very well in social service.

3 Since then, you have expanded the scope of your community services, touching a wide spectrum of people in need. Your clients include children, youths, elderly and families. You have also helped the intellectually disabled, hearing impaired and the terminally ill. I commend and salute you for your work. For some of those whom you have helped, words cannot express their appreciation and gratitude.

4 I am very happy when told you were setting up a Youth Centre. Like youths in past generations, our youths face many issues that trouble them. Their conflict with the older generation, such as their parents' , is well known. In addition, today' s youths live in a world that is fast-paced, technologically advanced, and ever changing. Unlike youths of earlier generations, today' s youths know they will grow up into a totally different world which they may not even know. They face more pressure to excel in their studies, but at the same time know that much of what they learnt would have become obsolete by the time they need to use the knowledge. They feel the world is becoming a "winner takes all" place, where people compete to win and have less time with each other. They fear losing and becoming irrelevant, and do not know whom they could turn to for comfort. Nobody seems to care anymore.

5 We must prove the pessimists wrong. One way is to use the strength I saw 18 months ago in your office' s Grand Opening: enthusiasm and teamwork. Both come from the heart, from a feeling that you care. This should be the spirit of the Youth Centre. Youths value friendship. Friendship amongst young people is purer and more sincere. This explains why most of us get to know our real life-long friends when we were in our teens. If you build on such spirit, youths will come to your Centre, and your Centre will succeed. What is more, success will breed success. The youths will tell others how your Centre is full of warmth, and how your Centre provides a sanctuary from the world of the pessimists. More

will come, and you will face the challenge of space. But this is a problem of success, a pleasant problem coming from strong public support and expectation.

6 I understand that you have started Leadership Development Programmes with neighbouring schools. You have also started out-reach programmes to the youths. These are good starts. The test is your ability to attract participants through your sincerity, care, and commitment. I know you can do it, and I wish you well.

7 Once again, I congratulate the City Harvest Community Services Association for the good work that you have done for our community. May this Youth Centre be another nice feather on your cap.

Thank you.

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