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04-2/81/11/19

SPEECH BY MR FONG SIP CHEE, MINISTER OF STATE FOR CULTURE,
AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE 'SINGAPORE INNOVATIONS IN ART' EXHIBITION
SPONSORED BY SINGAPORE AIRLINES (SIA) AND MINISTRY OF CULTURE
AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM ART GALLERY ON 19 NOVEMBER 1981 AT 5.30 PM

The 'Singapore Innovations In Art' competition, jointly sponsored by Singapore Airlines and the Ministry of Culture, is in itself an innovative endeavour in our arduous effort in the promotion of the arts and culture in Singapore.

It is a competition of great significance and augurs well for the future development in the moulding of a well-orientated, gracious and a more refined citizenry. While the Ministry provides the organisation and physical support to this competition, SIA funded the entire project. Therein lies the missing link and the impetus which can propel us to greater heights - the financial support and the appreciation of the arts not only by those who are already engrained in the search for inner beauty but also by those who can, either individually or collectively, give positive support in the appreciation of our creativity.

The Management of SIA will forgive me if I were to offer a deviation to their much popularised slogan "A Great Way To Fly", it has given us "A Great Way To Live", a culturally richer life. Perhaps, it is "a great way to present a corporate image" which the SIA has been so concerned with, although occasionally not without the attendant irritating controversy.

The development of arts and culture cannot be sustained, much less flourish, without the enthusiastic support and participation of all strata of our community and all sectors of Singapore society in artistic and cultural pursuits. I hope SIA will not consider it a breach of propriety and etiquette if I were to mention in passing that we have indeed benefited much from similar activities participated by a number of local and multi-national corporations. Mobil Singapore had given very generously in the

staging of three previous Festivals of Arts. Esso Singapore sponsored the National Music Competition and recently, Shell Company funded the Drama Festival and competition. I mention these because I firmly believe that there is definitely a rightful place and a social role which large commercial and industrial corporations can have and can play in our quest for an identity of a community which, although without the advantage of homogeneity, but is endowed with the capacity to appreciate a much more varied and richer heritage.

The various sectors in Singapore, be they the commercial, industrial, the oil industry, banking, insurance and the service and tourist industries, either individually or as separate interest groups, can each 'adopt' one discipline of the arts. In that way, their success in their respective enterprises will be more meaningful to society and their acceptance by the community more readily and appreciative. They cannot detach themselves from the very community upon which they build their fortunes and upon whose people they depend so much for their functionaries.

It will not be out of place therefore for me to appeal to all these corporations to come forward to participate in a joint venture investment in the intrinsic quality of a people worthy of their trust and support.

The SIA's involvement in this project is fully rewarded by the appreciation of all concerned for the interest they evince in cultural and artistic development in Singapore. The high quality of the entries testifies to this. The winning entries will be displayed at the Singapore Changi Airport and at SIA offices overseas.

May I, in extending to SIA my thanks for their participation in this project, also hope that there will be more of such joint venture with them in the future. Perhaps, SIA may seriously want to consider adopting either the visual arts or the performing arts as an added feather in their corporation cap.

To all the judges, particularly the four distinguished gentlemen from our four ASEAN partners, may I place on record our gratitude for your valuable contributions. Your presence has enriched our knowledge. Finally, to all the participants, may I say that the quality and the multiplicity of approach you employ have borne excellent testimony to your creativity and standards in your works.

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