

24 DEC 1993

PRESS RELEASE

93 - HR - 10

Release No.: 03/DEC
14-1/93/12/03

**SPEECH BY DR RICHARD HU,
MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
MINISTER FOR FINANCE, AT THE AWARD CEREMONY FOR
THE QUATERNARIO IAITA AT THE RAFFLES BALLROOM,
WESTIN HOTEL ON FRIDAY, 3 DECEMBER 1993 AT 2.30 PM**

Dr Richard Hu, Minister for Finance and National Development, was to have been here to address you. Unfortunately, he is unable to be here as he has to attend a Parliamentary session this afternoon. He has asked me to extend his sincere apologies and to deliver his speech on his behalf.

I am pleased to join you at this afternoon's award ceremony for the Third Quaternario International Award for Innovative Technology in Architecture (IAITA). On behalf of Singapore, I would also like to extend a warm welcome to all the overseas delegates.

I understand that the Quaternario IAITA was set up to encourage innovation in architectural design and the use of advanced building technology. The ultimate aim is to motivate architects to design better quality buildings - buildings which are not only aesthetically pleasing, but blend well with the old buildings and the new urban landscape.

Singapore is an ideal venue to hold this event. The Asia Pacific region, and Southeast Asia, in particular, is experiencing high growth. This has led to an increase in engineering and construction projects in these countries.

Being strategically located in this fast growing region, Singapore is well positioned to offer world-renowned architects, like yourselves, a springboard to tap the region's business potential and help in the design and development of quality buildings.

Singapore's construction industry, too, is experiencing high growth rates. Our architects and builders are busy not only with new building projects. They are also involved in several restoration projects of our old buildings, successfully blending the best of the old with the new.

Singapore's multi-cultural and cosmopolitan society has proved to be a rich inspirational storehouse for our architects. Many buildings in Singapore stand as a testimony to this, reflecting a blend of the old and the contemporary.

Singapore's Housing and Development Board (HDB) apartments, built under Singapore's public housing programme are also a testimony to creative architecture in Singapore. Generally, public housing offers limited scope for creative design. But over the years, our architects have designed HDB apartments that are architecturally different by adding some creative touches. As many of you may know, our architects received international recognition for the public housing programme when the United Nations awarded the 1992 World Habitat Award to the Tampines New Town. This public housing estate was designed by Singapore architects and urban planners. The UN award has helped to put Singapore on the map of world contemporary architecture.

In designing buildings, architects have to consider many aspects. Weather conditions rank high among these considerations. The demands of a tropical climate in Asia are very different from those posed by the temperate climate of Europe, Japan and North America. Many architects will agree that an important and elusive aspect of architectural design for the tropical climate is water-proofing. Designs and materials, which have worked in temperate countries, have failed when applied in the tropical climate. The humid climate and the trees planted near buildings to beautify the surroundings add to the problem by stimulating the growth of algae and other biological organisms on buildings.

Singapore's climate is very similar to that in other Southeast Asian countries. Singapore can, therefore, be an effective test-bed for various construction technologies and architectural designs for use in the tropics. The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) have, in fact, embarked on a joint research project to study the effectiveness of construction systems and materials used for the external walls and roofs of buildings in the tropical climate. The project's findings will be useful for architects and engineers who wish to work in the tropics.

International conferences and awards such as the Quaternario 93, provide an excellent platform for Singapore designers and architects to exchange ideas and experiences with their peers and leaders in the industry. And awards such as the IAITA help foster building excellence. I understand that the organisers had a difficult time selecting the winning entries. I am sure that all nominees for the IAITA award are honoured to have been nominated. I congratulate all nominees and the winners of the Third Quaternario IAITA. I hope the awards will motivate all architects and builders to greater creativity and excellence. I wish all our overseas friends, a most memorable and pleasant stay in Singapore.

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