

Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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SPEECH BY MR LEE KHOON CHOY, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE (PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE) AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE EXPOSITION '82 AT THE SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, KATONG ROOM ON TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 82 AT 11.30 AM

The government spends large sums of money every year on community development in order to promote greater social cohesion and better quality of life for our people. But the government alone will not be able to shoulder the massive responsibility of promoting community development in Singapore. Nor is it desirable to do so for it would be against the very principle of community development. That is why the government has all the while been encouraging community participation in and contribution to all areas of community development. The building of community centres and financing of community centre programmes are but two examples of the concept of community participation in actual practice.

But fund raising is not without problems. The ability to raise funds differs from constituency to constituency. For a variety of reasons, some constituencies have always had abundant funds whereas other constituencies seem to be constantly plagued by the shortage of funds. The richer community centres are in a better position to provide more and sophisticated programmes while their poorer siblings have to be contented with fewer and simpler activities. These differences eventually result in the varying degrees of effectiveness of community centres in catering to the needs of their respective communities.

These are the facts of life which we have to accept. We can do something to help those community centres which are less resourceful. And this is why the PA Community Development Fund was launched. The Fund is aimed at subsidising poorer community centres in organising much-needed activities. These include sophisticated activities which will

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meet the emerging needs of our increasingly affluent society. Such activities, like ballet, music, language studies and computer courses are invariably more expensive to organise. With limited resources at our disposal, we cannot allow unnecessary duplication and wasteful competition. That is why we have the cluster concept which promotes rational programming and pooling of resources. The Community Development Fund will help us in the implementation of the cluster concept.

Since last October, when we launched the Community Development Fund, we have raised about half a million dollars. A few fund-raising projects have been planned for this year. But by far the most ambitious project will be the International Trade Exposition '82 which we are launching today. This Exposition, jointly organised with Tanah Merah Community Centre Building Fund Committee is about the largest outdoor trade fair ever held in Singapore. It is not our intention to compete with other Community Centre Building Fund Committees or other grassroots organisations in fund-raising projects. We will be only dealing with big and special projects like this Exposition.

I hope that local and foreign firms and manufacturers will support this project. You need not treat it as a social obligation but as a hard-headed business proposition. You will find out that it is worth your participation after you study all the details.

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