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SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW,
AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE PEOPLE'S
ASSOCIATION ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 1960 AT 8.30 P.M.

This is the first meeting of the People's Association. I extend a warm welcome to you as representatives of your various organisations. I hope that through your participation in this Association, your various organisations will make a co-ordinated and concerted effort to bring the cultural, recreational and sporting activities of your Association to the mass of the people. The organisations you represent range from social service organisations, adult education, to boys' clubs, girls' clubs, boy scouts, sports clubs, to students' unions, musical society, art society, photographic society and so on. Some may wonder what decided the Government to bring together such a diverse collections of clubs and associations. The answer is simply that each one of your association represents some cultural, sporting, recreational or intellectual pursuit. Each one of you caters to a section of the community in a social,

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intellectual or cultural community activity. The vast mass of people are mere spectators of your sporting efforts, your musical shows and your photographic efforts. Here, through this Association, we hope you will be able to contribute your share in enabling more of the people to participate in these activities. For example, the photographic society, perhaps through donations and contributions of well-wishers, will be able to set up a photographic section for those people who are interested in photography, but for reasons of finance and opportunity are unable to participate in its fascinations. Similarly, through your musical and art societies we hope brass bands and other musical troupes will be formed in the People's Association's community centres. You can help to cultivate the talent of our young men and women in useful and creative activity.

The others are the more obvious - football, basketball, Chinese athletic arts and physical training. You can spread these recreational and sporting activities to the broad mass of the people.

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This is a job not for the Government alone. Your activities can contribute more meaning to leisure than any edict of the Government. Your effort in bringing these recreational activities to the people can help draw them together into a close-knit communities. You can help break down the linguistic and cultural barriers that divide the people. You can bring to increasing numbers of

people interesting and useful ways of spending leisure which will make life more meaningful and worthwhile.

Of course we do not expect you all to undertake the tedious chore of running the organisation, tending to the administrative details which even recreation demands. In this Association you will be provided with the apparatus through which you can make your contribution as effective as possible. There is a central administration in the Association, and in every community centre we hope to train community centre leaders and team leaders to draw them into these activities and bring the people together. This is not a government department like the Social Welfare Department.

This is an effort by you a representative cross-section of the people with some help from the Government, to bring more meaning into the lives of the people. It is for us to tell you what the broad aims and objectives are. It is for you to tell us in your particular fields how to make a good job of it.

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For let us never forget that the vast mass of our young people, just like people anywhere else in the world, want to live happy, active and eventful lives. Tedium, boredom and a sense of emptiness in their lives will lead to a vacuum which cannot have useful social results. Let us help fill up the minds and the

time of our youth with healthy and wholesome activities. In the People's Association we will be able to draw them into more group and community recreation and social activities and give opportunities for the selection and training of the natural ground leaders of the people - young men and women who through lack of opportunities have not been able to develop their talent. If the People's Association can spot these people and help them blossom forth, we would have done a service to the community.

AUGUST 20, 1960. (Time issued 1600 hours)

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