SUMMARY OF SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH ESTATE COMMUNITY CENTRE'S 8TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS ON 25TH JUNE 1972

Looking back at the 10 years since I was last here, we can take satisfaction at having got where we are today. Looking forward to the acceleration in growth, we must be on the alert to some predictable problems. Nobody can predict what kind of a world Singapore will have to face in 20, or even 10 years, from now. Very few people can predict with certainty the sort of future we will have 5 years hence.

However, there are certain things which are within our control, for example, population planning we can do and which in turn can decide the training we can afford to give to our children, which in its turn will determine the kind of society we shall become.

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We either move forward, or fall backwards. It is not possible to stand still.

Since 1959, we have had to solve urgent problems. The emphasis was on numbers -- quantity -- more factories, more jobs, more houses, more hospital

beds, more schools, and more places per class to meet the numbers. These problems of numbers then demanded immediate solutions.

But having solved most of them, we must decide now on a better quality of life. We must shift the emphasis on to quality, not quantity. In order to have a better quality of life, the first prerequisite is a sharp reduction in the number of children in each family.

We cannot afford to have 8, 10, 12 children per family, if we want better schools, smaller classes per teacher, better training in technical education. No government, no parent can provide for 8, 10, 12 children, particularly if the parents are only earning $200 to $300 per month.

We must taper off the population growth. Then we can spend more per individual child -- feed him or her, nurture and train him or her, so that his or her performance will be higher. To have better quality of life, we must invest more in each child. This we can do only if we have 3 or better still only two children per family.

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We just cannot multiply infinitely. It is just not possible to keep on reclaiming the sea, reclaiming marsh land like reclaiming Kallang Basin, building

more factories, building more high-rise flats. We want not any factory, but those factories with higher skills, more for sophisticated manufacture, for such factories can pay workers more. Then our workers can live in better homes, rear better children, and have a better environment.

In the next decade, we must set out to achieve in qualitative terms what we have already achieved in quantitative terms in the last decade.

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