

Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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SPEECH BY MR LEE YIOK SENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT), AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE CAMPAIGN ON THE "USE OF PLASTIC BAGS FOR REFUSE DISPOSAL" AT THE BASKETBALL COURT NEAR BLK 30 MARSILING DRIVE ON SUNDAY 24 APRIL 1983 AT 7.00 PM

Singapore has been acclaimed as one of the cleanest cities in the world. Our "Clean and Green" image has been achieved not without great determination and effort.

The beginnings can be traced to 1968 when our first national "Keep Singapore Clean" campaign was launched. Today, HDB has a total workforce of 10,000 employees to provide cleansing services to housing estates. The Ministry of the Environment (MOE) employs more than 3,000 workers to perform refuse removal and street cleansing. Over the last five years, the HDB and MOE together spent more than \$500 million on refuse removal and cleansing services

Despite all the effort put in by public authorities to keep the environment clean, littering still prevails in HDB housing estates. If you look around the housing estates in the morning just after the HDB cleaners have done their job, you will find them spick and span. But as the day progresses, you will find the estates being littered and you will get whiffs of malodour from the refuse chutes. These are clear indications that many HDB residents have still not discarded their anti-social habit of littering. The bad smell coming from refuse chutes is due to the failure of residents to dispose of their household garbage correctly by using plastic bags. Why is this so? Is the effort put in by the Government insufficient?

I would like to urge HDB residents to use plastic bags for disposing household refuse. This will improve cleanliness and hygiene and make the job of our estate cleaners much easier. Wet refuse should be drained before they are placed into plastic bags. Plastic bags should be tied securely before disposal into the refuse chutes. These are very simple procedures requiring only a little extra effort. There is no reason why all of us cannot cultivate this good habit. Let us start from today.

The HDB provides every flat with an individual refuse chute. Residents must treasure this convenience and make proper use of it. Most of us keep our homes clean and tidy. What we need to do is to extend the concept of our home to the areas beyond our door step. We must also impress upon our children not to litter and dirty public areas. An effective way to do this is for the adults to set a good example.

The responsibility of keeping the environment clean does not lie solely with HDB and MOE. Residents must also shoulder some of this responsibility. No amount of effort and money from the Government can keep the environment clean for long if people continue to litter and do not exercise proper care in refuse disposal.

I am confident that our residents will take on the responsibility of keeping the environment clean and ensure that Singapore continues to be one of the cleanest cities in the world.

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