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**SPEECH BY DR ONG CHIT CHUNG, PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY (HOME AFFAIRS & LABOUR), AND
CHAIRMAN OF BUKIT BATOK TOWN COUNCIL AND
MP FOR BUKIT BATOK, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF
BUKIT BATOK TOWN COUNCIL'S 5TH FESTIVAL DAY,
HELD AT BLK 630, BUKIT BATOK CENTRAL,
ON SUNDAY, 30 MAY 1993 AT 10.30AM**

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to be here today to celebrate Bukit Batok Town Council's 5th Festival Day. This is an important event we organise yearly for our residents. We want to show our appreciation to our residents for all the support they have given us.

We have lined up several interesting items in this year's programme ranging from stage cultural shows, magic shows, children's fancy dress competition to recycling projects competition. These are made possible through the combined efforts of Bukit Batok Town Council and the community organisations of Bukit Batok and Chua Chu Kang Constituencies.

Our special item for this year is the Recycling Projects Competition. This is in line with the theme "Help Save the Earth". The participating teams are encouraged to use recycled materials like drink cans, tins, boxes, straws or bottles to create sculptures. Through this competition, we hope to create an awareness among residents to conserve our resources in order to protect our environment.

As you can see this morning, there were seven teams consisting of school students and RC members working diligently to create their own "master-piece". One company has also brought with them a large container to encourage the recycling of papers. Residents, in exchange for the old newspapers, will receive samples of new tissue papers made from recycled materials.

I am glad we are all able to gather here today to enjoy these programmes in peace and harmony. This is unlike the situation in Sri Lanka. There is racial tension and even violence in the streets. This is because the majority Sinhalese Government are faced with a racial conflict with the minority Tamil Separatists. Even the assassinations of her top political figures are not uncommon.

Today, the performances and events put up by the various racial groups show that we are able to enjoy peace in the country. We are given a chance to appreciate the fine art of the Indian dance, the smooth rhythm of the Malay Kompang. Even taking a drink from the Chinese Tea Art stall brings a new understanding of the Chinese culture. Such is the benefit of living in a harmonious country.

We should not take this for granted as this does not come to us by chance. The PAP government in Singapore, has from the

very beginning of our independence, stressed that racial and religious harmony is of utmost importance in our country. It is the cornerstone of our progress and prosperity.

Look at Cambodia, for instance, her people have to vote for a new government in constant fear of attacks. Her people are living below subsistence level. They do not have the benefit of even the basics like proper housing, clean running water and electricity. They struggle each day to even fill their stomach. Hence, we can see that a stable political climate is essential if our people is to enjoy peace and harmony.

We should continue to be harmonious and seek to understand that different races have their own unique culture. We must also continue to be tolerant of our neighbours' religions and their practices. Such understanding would ensure peace and prosperity to the country.

So, let us enjoy this Festival Day in peace and harmony. I would like to thank Mr Eric Lee, Chairman of the Festival Day Committee, Committee members and grassroot leaders, participating groups, Town Council staff, sponsors, donors and other well wishers who have made this event a successful and meaningful one.

Thank you.

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