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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT ONG TENG CHEONG
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DESIGN FORUM,
SINGAPORE, AT THE RAFFLES CITY CONVENTION CENTRE
ON WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 1994 AT 10.30 AM**

I am pleased to be here this morning to open the Fourth International Design Forum.

The design movement in Singapore has gained tremendous momentum since the First International Design Forum in 1988. Today, the International Design Forum is a major world design event. It has the support of the world design body, the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) and enjoys strong international support and participation.

In the next few days, over 300 delegates from all over the world will be here to exchange views and ideas, and to view award winning products from 10 countries renowned for their design capabilities. I am also pleased to note that in addition to Malaysia and Singapore, two more Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, namely Thailand and the Philippines, are participating in the Forum for the first time.

Society and lifestyle are changing rapidly because of technological advancement. Today, Singaporeans are more conscious of good design. We see this happening around us. Shops, hotels and commercial buildings are being upgraded and refurbished to improve their image. Consumers are opting for better designed products and are willing to pay for it.

Our manufacturers and industrialists should therefore realise that good product design is not an optional extra, but

a necessity. Design excellence gives a product a competitive edge over other similar products in the marketplace. Singapore is a small market, and her products have to compete in a vast world market.

Our manufacturers must therefore build in design excellence when developing their products. Good design cannot be introduced as an afterthought but must be integrated right from the start.

A total approach is also important. Products will be evaluated not only on prices alone but also for their utility, diversity, uniqueness, quality and reliability. Even after-sales service should be incorporated into the designing process.

According to the 1994 World Competitiveness Report, Singapore products are ranked second in the world in terms of the ce/Quality ratio. However, we must not be complacent but strive continuously to improve the quality of our products.

Judging from the overwhelming response to the Young Designers' Award 1994, and the high standard of entries submitted, we are not short of design talents. These promising young design talents must be nurtured so that they will, in due course, form a pool of design professionals to meet the demands of future development. The introduction of design courses in our universities, colleges and polytechnics also have a positive impact on the way design is perceived and used in the future.

My congratulations to the Singapore Trade Development Board and the Design centre for organising this forum. I hope participants will have a fruitful and enriching session. It is now my pleasure to declare the Fourth International Design Forum open.

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