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SPEECH BY DR SEET AI MEE, MINISTER OF STATE (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION), AT THE BUKIT GOMBAK FAMILY DAY AT BUKIT BATOK EAST AVENUE 2 (JUNCTION OF HILLVIEW TERRACE) ON SUNDAY, 4 JUNE 1989 AT 9 AM

Saya mengucapkan selamat pagi kepada tuan-tuan, puan-puan dan murid2 yang di-hormati sekalian.

To all present here, parents and children a very good morning. An old proverb goes "The conditions of success are always easy - we have to toil awhile, endure awhile, believe awhile.

I believe all three elements were present in the organisation of today's Bukit Gombak Constituency's Family Day in 1989. I have seen the Chairman of the Organising Committee, the Chairman of the Sub-Committees, the CCC Chairman, Dr Lee Kum Tatt and his CCC members, the RCs, CCMC, CDCC, CSC, YEC, WEC, the two Senior Citizens' Clubs, the school principals and staff and their children, kindergarten staff, Branch members - in short, the whole community put their shoulders to the ambitious task of organising this big day.

We are a new constituency, it is our first big effort and as a constituency family, we have together -

Toiled awhile - Yes, many here today have worked day and night for this day

Endured awhile - There was much perseverance

Believed awhile - What started as the vision of a few has multiplied and become the vision of many

Today's activities are the culmination of half a year's planning. Today's success is the result of us believing that we can be and are a big family working together for the well-being of the constituency.

Today's Bukit Gombak Family Day is the first and the beginning of and sets the pace for many more activities to be organised for our constituency. There will be other activities, other festivities and we will be having them all in the spirit of family togetherness.

If we are to have a theme for 1989 and 1990, I would suggest that this theme should be: "Our Bukit Gombak Family". The phrase speaks for itself.

The family is the basic unit of community and society; it is the nucleus of civilisation. Families are enduring institutions. They have been the foundation for virtually every society known to history. A strong family possesses incredible strength and resilience, especially when faced with adversity. As Charles W. Eliot, a renowned 19th century American educator, once said:

"The security and elevation of the family and of family life are the prime objects of civilisation, and the ultimate ends of all industry".

The stronger our families are, the more stable society will be.

Nowadays, many homes appear to be working on three shifts - fathers and mothers are on the night shift, grandparents, maids, baby sitters, foster parents, or child care centres on the day shift, and the children shift for themselves. It is only during weekends, on public holidays

or when parents are on leave from their offices that families work on full shift. I do not know whether this social trend will have any adverse implication for the family, in the long run. I hope that our pursuit of excellence will not lead to an erosion of family values and a weakening of family ties. We must ensure that the family as the basic unit of society is preserved.

In many ways, managing a constituency is like running a family. The only difference is in the scale. We in Bukit Gombak should think of ourselves as one big family. We can base all our goals and actions on building up that family; with the stronger helping the weaker, the richer the poorer, the more able teaching the less able and the whole family working together when there are tasks to be accomplished. If we can adopt this simple approach here, then I am sure Bukit Gombak will grow to be a strong community - one based on good old family traditional values. At the same time, through working and participating as one family together in the various activities organised for the constituency, our families living in Bukit Gombak will be further strengthened.

Finally, I would like to thank all the various people who have put in much efforts or have contributed in any way in making this event possible. I declare this Family Day open and wish all of you here an enjoyable day.
