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**SPEECH BY DR SEET AI MEE, MINISTER OF STATE  
(COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT) AND (EDUCATION),  
AT THE NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL OF SINGAPORE  
FUND-RAISING DINNER HELD AT THE NEPTUNE THEATRE RESTAURANT  
ON FRIDAY, 30 JUNE 1989 AT 7.30 PM**

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My husband and I are indeed happy to join you at this function tonight, first, to witness the Miss Singapore International contest and, secondly, to be with you at this dinner which is organised to raise funds for some worthy charitable causes.

Since 1975, the National Safety Council of Singapore and the Singapore Women's Association have annually organised a charity function to raise funds not only for their respective areas of community service but also to support a particular welfare organisation.

Of the \$100,000/- the organisers hope to raise at tonight's function, I understand that a large percentage will be donated to the Kidney Foundation and the Handicaps Welfare Association and the balance to be shared between the two organisations to further their work in Industrial, Home and Road Safety campaigns in the case of the National Safety Council of Singapore, and meeting the needs of senior citizens, the sick and destitute and the disabled, in the case of the Singapore Women's Association.

Community service and social work is a hallmark of an enlightened society. Indeed, the area of community service and social work is not a new phenomenon in Singapore. The whole concept has its roots from ancient times when people thrived through communal living of sharing and caring - as indeed many tribes and natives in many countries still do today.

In multi-cultural and multi-religious Singapore, a common demoninator that binds our people of different backgrounds together - would be the teachings of the mainstream religions and personal convictions concerning compassion, benevolence and mutual support for our fellow-men. These teachings are given expression through the many voluntary welfare organisations and service clubs that are engaged directly or indirectly in improving the lives of the less-endowed and less-fortunate.

Today, there are some 274 voluntary welfare organisations in Singapore, of which 67 are affiliated to the Singapore Council of Social Service and there are numerous service groups which are involved in welfare work through ad hoc activities such as fund raising and the conducting of various campaigns or projects from time to time.

The scope for social service and welfare work is enormous and calls not only for the involvement, but also the commitment of individuals and organisations.

Let me elaborate on the difference:- between involvement and commitment, whether it be in volunteer welfare work, or in the jobs we have and the work we do. A story is told in England of a hen and a pig arguing about who contributed more to farm produce. The hen chirped out, 'I do, I do. I supply the eggs for most English breakfasts.' To which, the pig answered, 'I do more. I am the bacon.' The hen's involvement is in providing the egg; the pig's involvement by providing the bacon suggests total dedication and sacrifice.

In social work both involvement and commitment are important. We need the whole community, companies, businesses, schools etc to be involved, to be giving and participating, and we need also a number of committed individuals to organise, to run, and, to do. May I at this time express my earnest thanks to the many of you present

and thousands others for your continued involvement and commitment to the service of the disabled and the less privileged.

Singapore has developed and progressed at a fast rate since it gained independence in 1965. We are able to achieve our targets and goals simply because of our political stability and the hard work and commitment of our people. In order that our nation remains stable and prosperous, we must continue to be a strong and cohesive society, always aiming to be better and stronger. We should also make it our commitment to ensure that all sectors of our population benefit and enjoy equally the fruits of our labour and success.

The poor, the less-endowed and the disabled we will always have with us and we need to show our care for them, and to share with them. Through functions such as this evening's we are being given the opportunity to do both, to show care and to share.

I wish to thank the organisers and the girls who are participants in this evening's pageant. I wish every contestant the best of luck in her quest for today's crown and I hope that today's Miss Singapore International 1989 will have greater success and do us proud at the Miss International contest to be held in Japan in September this year.

In closing, I wish to commend all the supporters who have so generously contributed to make this occasion a success and trust that all present will be treated to an enjoyable and meaningful evening. It leaves me now to thank both the National Safety Council of Singapore and the Singapore Women's Association for having my husband and I as their guests this evening.

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