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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Mr Sidek Saniff, 22 Apr 00, 10am

Singapore Government

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**SPEECH BY MR SIDEK SANIFF, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR
THE ENVIRONMENT AT THE HSBC/NYAA YOUTH
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS PRESENTATION CEREMONY AT THE
BURKILL HALL, SINGAPORE ORCHID GARDEN, ON EARTH DAY,
SATURDAY, 22ND APRIL 2000 AT 10:00AM**

Prof Leo Tan
Chairman, NYAA Council

Mr Eric Gill
Chief Executive Officer
HSBC Singapore

Mr James Soh
Executive Director
NYAA Council

National Archives of Singapore

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

1 I am happy to see so many of you here this morning to witness the HSBC/NYAA Youth Environmental Awards Presentation Ceremony.

2 The future of the environment does indeed lie in the hands of the youth of today. I am glad that all of you took an interest to come here on a Saturday morning to support your friends who will be receiving these awards.

3 The world we live in faces many problems and worries. Environmental worries such as global warming, ozone depletion, deforestation, indiscriminate hazardous waste disposal, air and water pollution have become issues for household discussions. Although such discussions are common, few actually know the implications and its seriousness. So, then, the challenge that our youth faces today is one of doing what they can to protect the environment instead of just being aware of such environmental problems.

4 The NYAA Council and HSBC Singapore has put in place many youth environmental programmes, backed by strong endorsement from the Ministry of the Environment, to provide opportunities and platforms for youth who have the desire to step forward and contribute towards an environmental cause.

5 I am told that since the inaugural HSBC/NYAA Youth Environmental Awards was launched in 1998, it has inspired more than 12,000 young people to participate in various environmental protection and nature conservation programmes and projects. This is heartening because it does not only reflect the interest of our youth in the environment but more so how these programmes and projects have achieved their goal of raising environmental awareness.

6 Through such environmental programmes and projects, many potential youth leaders have been spotted and groomed for greater heights. Today's Award Presentation Ceremony is one good example of the NYAA Council and HSBC Singapore's recognition of youth contributions in environmental protection.

7 Through this Award, the NYAA Council and HSBC Singapore have generated national interest, recognition and support for outstanding youth leaders who have excelled in their pursuits of a better environment, and inspired them to achieve even more for the environmental cause and the community.

8 The award has also helped lay the foundation for our youth to achieve greater heights in environmental protection and nature conservation activities.

9 Winners of the award, I hope will eventually become winners of the Green Leaf Award (Youth Category), the highest environmental award of the nation.

10 I am also very pleased to note that the NYAA Council and HSBC Singapore have arranged for the Award winners to be sent to UNEP's headquarters for Asia and the Pacific based in Bangkok, Thailand. These winners will be given the opportunity to view some Thai environmental projects. This meaningful trip will also be an invaluable opportunity for our young leaders to be exposed to regional and international efforts in environmental and nature conservation work. I certainly hope that they will treasure this eye-opening experience and return to Singapore with a renewed perspective of the environmental cause in the region.

11 In conclusion, I wish to commend the NYAA Council and HSBC Singapore for their active role in developing our youth potential in their environmental efforts. I hope more private enterprises will follow HSBC Singapore's example and similarly step forward to lend their support to the environmental cause.

12 My congratulations to the winners of the HSBC/NYAA Youth Environmental Awards 2000 and to all schools and tertiary institutions who supported the Award by nominating your students. Through our combined efforts, we will all strive to ensure that the young people we groom today will be a force for change to secure the future of the environment.

13 Thank you.