

# Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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SPEECH BY MR TEO CHONG TEE, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AT THE INTERNATIONAL  
DAY OF THE DEAF OPEN HOUSE AND EXHIBITION AT THE  
SINGAPORE ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEAF, 225 MOUNTBATTEN ROAD,  
ON SUNDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 1983 AT 9 AM

I am glad to be here this morning to officiate at the International Day of the Deaf Open House and Exhibition organised by the Singapore Association for the Deaf. I understand that this is the first time that the association is observing the International Day of the Deaf which falls on the last Sunday in September every year.

An occasion like this serves to heighten public awareness of the plight of the hearing impaired in our midst. Although they may appear physically normal, and most people have less sympathy for them, only those who live in silence can realise the tragedy of deafness. They should neither be ignored nor treated with indifference because of their disabilities. Instead, efforts to understand, accept and communicate with people with hearing disabilities would help create feelings of self-worth and greater sense of belonging in them. This would also give them an assurance that we care for them despite their faulty hearing faculties. It is important to regard them as an integral part of society.

The Singapore Association for the Deaf is to be commended for its relentless effort in providing educational and vocational training to prepare the hearing impaired for eventual employment in the vocation for which they have been trained. Employment is an important component in the

process of rehabilitating people with disabilities. They will be able to lead a normal and full life only when they secure a satisfying job that could utilize their residual capacity. The general criteria in selecting jobs for the disabled should match their aptitudes and abilities to the requirements of the job.

I am very pleased to learn that the students whom the Singapore Association for the Deaf has prepared for the National Trade Certificate Grade III (NTC 3) examinations conducted by the Vocational and Industrial Training Board have done exceptionally well. From 1980 to 1982, 94 per cent in Furniture-making Course, 80 per cent in the General Welding Course and 74 per cent in the Dress-making Course have passed the examinations. All the graduates are now gainfully employed in their respective industries. It served to prove that people with disabilities can take advantage of their residual abilities and maximise their latent potentials to the fullest. The normal persons should help the disabled in realising their aim to be contributing members of society, rather than persons to be pitied.

Employers too must continue to play their part in providing opportunities to enable people with disabilities to prove their worth. Those who have offered employment opportunities to them should ensure that good relations prevail in the workplace between the normal and disabled employees. Because of the disability, it is sometimes necessary to consider whether any disparity between their performance and the requirements can be offset by the provision of an aid or adaptation or perhaps by restructuring the job requirement. More disabled people could be satisfactorily employed if greater use were made of good job design and methods - and of the aids and adaptations of

tools, machinery, premises and equipment. In this way, employers can assist the disabled and help them to become fully integrated members of our society.

On this note, I have pleasure in declaring the International Day of the Deaf Open House and Exhibition open.

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