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SPEECH BY DR TAN ENG LIANG AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SINGAPORE SWIMMING CLUB'S NEW SPORTS COMPLEX ON 19 MARCH 1983 AT 2.45 PM

In the last 30 years or so, Singapore has produced a number of notable swimmers. Beginning with Neo Chwee Kok in the early 50s, swimmers like Tan Thuan Heng, Patricia Chan and Junie Sng, to name a few, have followed in his illustrious footsteps. Each has made waves at both the South East and Asian levels of competition. Collectively they have put Singapore on the swimming map in this region. More importantly, they have demonstrated the capability and consistency of Singapore swimmers in winning international honours.

Now a new swimming era has dawned with the emergence of Ang Peng Siong as a world class swimmer. What Peng Siong has attained so far in world competition is most creditable. It is our hope now that his fine performance has inspired the cream of our young swimmers to set their sights higher and further and reach for stardom.

We have been accustomed to a number of swimming successes so much so that we have begun to take things for granted. For example, how often have we sat back and acknowledged the role of swimming clubs behind our success story in swimming? Hardly. Yet the swimming clubs have been the fertile ground that spawned many a Singapore champion. Clubs like the Singapore Swimming Club (SSC), the Chinese Swimming Club (CSC) and the People's Association Youth Swimming Club (PAYSG) and others have been responsible for churning

out champions at every age level for many years now. It is time we salute them and others for their contribution to swimming.

The clubs' role in encouraging swimming, both recreationally and competitively, complements the government contribution through the provision of facilities. Between 1976 and 1982, the first phase of the Master Plan for sports facilities in the Republic, seven swimming complexes - were built by Housing & Development Board (HDB) and one by the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) at a total cost of approximately \$32 million. In the next two years, two more swimming complexes - Ang Mo Kio North and Clementi - are scheduled to be opened, bringing to 20 swimming complexes all provided at government expense (approximately \$63 million) and coming under the administration of the SSC. This is a big increase if one considers that there were only six such complexes in 1970.

Singapore is fortunate to have so many swimming facilities at our disposal. The latest Sports Council Census on Sports Facilities shows that there are 84 public pools and 150 private pools, making a total of 234 pools of varying shapes and sizes. Based on a population of 2.5 million, we have a ratio of 1 pool to 10,700 persons. This compares very favourably with the ratio of 1:38,155 in Japan, which has 30,900 swimming pools in the country and a population of over 117 million.

I understand your club has spent about \$8 million to build this new sports complex which is technologically advanced in design and construction. This is a worthwhile investment in response to

members' needs for up-to-date, international standard facilities. With this new sports complex, which includes six squash courts, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a gymnasium and various games rooms, you join a select number of clubs which cater for a wide range of sporting activities that can readily satisfy the diverse needs of individuals. The quality of life of members in respect of their leisure will be enhanced. I commend the Management and members of the club for their foresight and planning. This is a sports complex that the club can be proud of.

To my mind, the future of swimming in Singapore will depend on two main factors: The continuing provision of swimming facilities by both the government and private sectors to meet rising demands, and the implementation of quality training programmes to produce better and younger champions. The experience of Ang Peng Siong has shown us that given all the necessary assistance in terms of finance, coaching and opportunities for international competition - a talented Singaporean swimmer can seriously challenge the best swimmers in the world, instead of just 'teasing' them and their records from time to time, and then fade away. This is our fervent hope for the future - the emergence of some young swimmers who are capable of taking on the best in Asia and then the world.

Having said this, it leaves me to congratulate the Singapore Swimming Club for this beautiful sports complex. It is now my pleasant duty to declare this new facility open.