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SPEECH BY DR TAY ENG SOON, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE
(EDUCATION), AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT CO PTE LTD (UDMC)
PASIR RIS CHALETs AT PASIR RIS PARK
ON SATURDAY, 21 JANUARY 1989 AT 11.00 AM

I am very pleased to be present at the official opening of the UDMC Chalets here at Pasir Ris. It is a double pleasure for me for I am also the MP for this area.

The UDMC who are a wholly-owned subsidiary of the MND Holdings Pte Ltd built these chalets for nearly \$11 million a year ago. During its first year of operation, 1988, there were over 14,000 bookings for the chalets. If you include the chalet-user's friends who visited the chalet complex, the total number of visitors is closer to one-quarter million! This testifies to the popularity of chalet holidays in Singapore.

At present, Singapore has a total of nearly 1,000 chalets, hostels and holiday bungalows. This number is made up of two groups. The first group of 830 are those like the UDMC chalets. They are open to the general public. The main chalets and holiday bungalows are those owned by the UDMC here at Pasir Ris and along the East Coast Parkway. The largest and most recent addition is at the NTUC Pasir Ris Resort which is next door - 396 chalets. The People's Association and Sentosa Corporation also have public chalets and bungalows.

The remaining 170 chalets belong to the statutory boards, the government, the SAF and private clubs and organisations. These are often used also by members of the public during off-season or through booking by the friends working in the respective bodies.

It is normal now to see many chalets and bungalows packed to overflowing at weekends as friends and visitors descend on the holiday makers. Many chalets are ablaze with barbecues at weekends. These large parties are very popular. They are obviously greatly enjoyed as occasions for fellowship and relaxation. My guess is that at any weekend evening, there may be as many as 20,000 Singaporeans gather at these holiday spots, assuming that each holiday bungalow has about 20 visitors for their parties. If this is kept up every weekend, as many as 1.0 million Singaporeans could be staying at or visiting chalets and holiday bungalows annually. If you add to that the 850,000 Singaporeans who travel abroad for holidays each year, even allowing for double counting, the total number of Singaporeans taking vacations away from home is indeed sizeable.

This trend is strongly indicative of Singaporeans aspiring to a middle-class lifestyle. This is good. As we do better as a country, we naturally want to make use of our holidays and leisure time for recreation. Staying for a few days or a week at a seaside chalet or bungalow or going on a trip overseas is becoming a way of life for many Singaporeans. It will enrich family life and bring about more gracious living.

May I conclude by wishing the UDMC success in providing holiday chalets and may I wish all those who use these facilities a very happy and enjoyable time.

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