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**ADDRESS BY MR YEO CHEOW TONG,  
MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, AT THE LAUNCH OF  
THE NATIONAL SAVE WATER CAMPAIGN 1995  
ON SATURDAY, 24 JUNE 1995 AT 9.30 AM**

Looking at what appears to be a vast amount of water in our reservoirs, and with our heavy rainfall in most months of the year, it would not be difficult for many Singaporeans to be misled into thinking that we will never run short of water. This is especially since potable water is readily available each time any of us turn on the tap.

The hard fact is that today, much of our water already has to be supplied from Johore. And there is a maximum amount of water that we are entitled to get from Johore under the existing water agreements. As I have reminded fellow Singaporeans several times in the last few months, if we continue to increase our water usage at the current rate of six per cent a year, we will run out of water in only six years' time, that is by the year 2001.

What is especially worrying is that this message does not appear to be taken seriously by the general public, as water consumption in the last two months is still increasing at over five per cent per annum. This apparent lack of concern among most fellow Singaporeans make the launch today of this National Save Water Campaign even more timely and important.

#### **Measures to encourage water conservation**

Over the years, the Public Utilities Board (PUB) has been regularly encouraging the public to conserve water. For example,

the PUB takes advantage of the dry months each year to include with the PUB bills mailers which encourage the prudent use of water. It also conducts talks in the schools to educate pupils on the need to save water.

In addition, the PUB has made it mandatory for all non-domestic premises and public places to install water-saving devices. It conducts water audits for high non-domestic water consumers and advises them on the appropriate water conservation measures. It also encourages the use of recycled, industrial or sea water wherever possible.

To further drive home the message that water is scarce and therefore precious, the Government introduced the water conservation tax in April 1991. The tax was raised by five per centage points in April this year. Even with the current water conservation tax, the price of potable water is still very much cheaper than what it will cost to desalinate seawater. We must therefore try to reduce the rate of increase in our water usage, in order to put off as long as possible the day when we use more water than what Johore can supply. The ideal would of course be for each one of us to even reduce our water usage.

As a significant amount of water is used for toilet flushing, the PUB will make it mandatory for only low capacity flushing cisterns to be installed from 1 April 1995. This new measure will apply to all new buildings and renovations which involve the replacement of water closets. The Housing and Development Board (HDB) has in fact been installing such cisterns in their new flats since 1990. The PUB estimates that the use of these cisterns will eventually save up to half of the water that is consumed by the flushing of toilets.

#### **Save Water Campaign '95 Activities**

The National Save Water Campaign this year has two objectives. First to help Singaporeans realise that water conservation is vital to our future. Second, to inform Singaporeans how to use water more prudently and effectively.

The Campaign will focus primarily on domestic consumers, as they use over half of our total water supply. It will provide tips to the general public on how to use less water, using the mass media and water conservation exhibitions at popular shopping centres on weekends. The PUB will also conduct talks on water conservation and visits to the water works for schools and the general public.

A highlight of this year's Campaign will be six water-rationing exercises, each lasting for one day. To be held next month, the exercise will let Singaporeans experience the difficulties and inconvenience that are brought about by water shortage. The exercise will involve 20 constituencies, and PUB will announce the details in due course.

I hope that this Save Water Campaign will help all Singaporeans realise and appreciate that every drop of water is precious, and equally important, that saving water requires only minimal effort from each one of us. It is simple actions like turning off the tap while soaping yourself in the shower rinsing your mouth using a glass of water, accumulating a full load of soiled clothes before using the washing machine, washing your vehicle with a small pail of water, instead of hosing it, etc.

I appeal to every Singaporean to make a personal commitment to use water wisely. Let us protect our future generations by making prudent and careful water usage a way of life. All we need is the resolve and discipline to change our mindsets and cultivate good water-saving habits that become second nature to us. As the Campaign slogan says, "IT IS IN YOUR HAND. USE WATER WISELY AND GENERATIONS WILL BENEFIT".

It is now my pleasure to declare open the 1995 National Save Water Campaign.

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