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**SPEECH BY MR EUGENE YAP GIAU CHENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY (TRADE & INDUSTRY) AND (THE ENVIRONMENT),
AT THE OPENING OF CHEMASIA/INSTRUMENTASIA/ANALABASIA '89
AT WORLD TRADE CENTRE, HALL 5
ON TUESDAY, 23 MAY 1989 AT 9.50 AM**

I am pleased to be here today to officiate at the opening of ChemAsia/InstrumentAsia/AnaLabAsia '89 exhibition and conference. Allow me first of all to welcome all overseas trade exhibitors and visitors and wish you all a pleasant stay in Singapore. I also like to wish you all every success in your business discussions, negotiations and promotions over the next few days.

The output of the chemical industry in Singapore totalled S\$4.6 billion in 1988, making it the third largest manufacturing sector after electronics and petrochemicals. There are approximately 145 chemical companies operating in Singapore, including many leading international chemical companies. Many have invested heavily to upgrade and expand their production facilities to produce a wide range of sophisticated chemicals for the local, regional as well as worldwide markets. Some international companies have also set up research, as well as technical-servicing bases here, to service the region.

Singapore has emerged as a major exporter of pharmaceutical products such as semi-synthetic penicillin as well as specialty chemicals such as titanium dioxide.

Her domestic exports of chemicals and chemical products, excluding petroleum and petroleum products, amounted to approximately S\$3.1 billion in 1988. Re-exports amounted to approximately S\$2.1 billion in the same year.

In all, total imports of chemicals and chemical products in 1988 amounted to S\$5.8 billion.

The chemical industry is thus an integral part of Singapore's manufacturing base. The government hopes to encourage more investments in the chemical industry, especially those which complement and strengthen Singapore's manufacturing and chemical trading base.

However, the growth of the industry cannot be at the expense of environmental standards. This is especially so in a small country like Singapore where 2.6 million people live on slightly over 600 square kilometres of land. Industries in Singapore have a crucial role to play to safeguard the quality of life which we enjoy. They must be prepared to have in place advanced pollution control technologies and invest in production processes which minimise pollution.

With the growth of the chemical industry in Singapore and the region, there is an urgent need for effective pollution control and monitoring equipment. Besides the use of these equipment, there must also be a safer approach in the management of hazardous chemicals. Recent events in places like Bhopal, Mexico City and Switzerland have served to remind us that accidents can and do occur. More comprehensive planning is needed by the chemical industry to tackle the hazards posed by the transportation, storage and disposal of chemicals. Better knowledge of the chemicals and the means available to deal with them must be obtained before we proceed to introduce them into our every day lives. Very often, the issues on how to deal with the chemicals are addressed long after the chemicals have made their widespread presence felt. The consequence is of course one of "too little, too late".

I am therefore glad that the exhibitions today will cover equipment and services for environmental control, detection-and-monitoring systems, pollution control systems and plant safety systems.

It is prudent for chemical manufacturers and traders to set aside a percentage of their annual R & D expenditure on how to contain accidental environmental pollution by their products. The costs would be well-justified as the benefits to the society and the environment will be incalculable. Today's business organisations are not only profit-oriented, they are also socially conscious corporate citizens. Modern organisations should not only be concerned with the provision of quality products and services but also with the preservation of the environment.

The organisers have done a good job in bringing to Singapore leading corporations of the chemical industry. I urge all participants and trade visitors to make the best use of the occasion. On this note, I have the pleasure to declare the ChemAsia/InstrumentAsia/AnaLabAsia exhibitions open.

Thank you.

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