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Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY BG (RES) GEORGE YONG-BOON YEO,
MINISTER OF STATE (FINANCE) AND (FOREIGN AFFAIRS),
AT KAMPONG KEMBANGAN COMMUNITY CENTRE'S DONATION DRAW
LAUNCHING CEREMONY AT SEA VIEW HOTEL
ON SATURDAY, 21 JANUARY 1989 AT 3.15 PM

The new Kampong Kembangan CC will replace the two existing CCs. The present Kampong Kembangan CC was opened by the Prime Minister in 1963. Kampong Eunus CC was also opened by the Prime Minister, in 1972. Tucked in the middle of private residential areas, both CCs now look poor and decrepit.

They did not always look poor and decrepit. When they were opened in the 60's and 70's, they were important centres for community activities in what were largely kampong areas. Relative to the kampong houses, the CCs at Kampong Eunus and Kampong Kembangan were not bad at all.

Singapore has made great progress in the last 20-30 years. Much of the old Kampong Kembangan constituency has changed beyond recognition. The old kampong areas have been re-developed, and in their place, new private and HDB developments. The community is now better educated and more middle-class.

A new CC is therefore needed. We need better and more attractive facilities because we are serving a different population mix. The new Kampong Kembangan CC will compare well with the new CCs we see elsewhere in Singapore.

But even more than new buildings, we need a new community spirit. Because of massive re-development in Kampong Kembangan, a lot of the old kampong spirit is lost.

There are many new HDB blocks, many new private houses. New families come from other districts in Singapore. Being new to a locality, it is natural that these newcomers are slow to mix and reluctant to participate. They prefer to withdraw to the confines of their own homes. Getting them involved and interested - that is the challenge to the community leaders in Kampong Kembangan.

All in, the new CC will cost about \$2.9 million. The Government will pay about \$2.2 million. We have to cover the balance of about \$700,000. Of this \$700,000, some \$450,000 have already been raised when Mr Yatiman Yusof was the MP of Kampong Kembangan. It was Yatiman who recognised the need for a new CC. He worked tirelessly to get it built and I shall now be the principal beneficiary of his labours. But that is a joke. Yatiman worked for the community of Kampong Kembangan and the beneficiary will be all of us who live in Kampong Kembangan.

The Government could have financed the whole project and saved us all the trouble of having to raise funds. That, however, would not be good. Because what we don't have to work for, we tend to take for granted and not value. By working together to raise the money, by involving as many people as possible, and by publicising the collective effort we all put in, we help build up the community spirit which will give life to the new CC.

We meet here today to launch the lucky draw which should cover the remaining deficit of about \$250,000. I thank all of you here, and also those who are not able to come today, for your support. Some of you are residents of Kampong Kembangan. Others are friends of Kampong Kembangan.

The active participation of the grassroot organisations in Kampong Kembangan is particularly significant because the new CC should become their meeting place. I hope the CCC and the RCs will make the new CC their home, not just the Pachitan RC, which is yet to be formed, but the existing RC 1 and RC 2 at Chai Chee and Bedok North. We must make the new CC a watering hole for all residents of Kampong Kembangan.

I am glad to announce today the appointment of two new key members to the Management Committee. Col (Ret) Tan Jer Meng is now the First Vice Chairman. Col Tan was my superior in the Air Force for many years. And Mr Tony Loh who becomes the Chairman of the Building Fund Committee.

I am also glad to announce that the three MPs of Aljunied GRC, Mr Chin Harn Tong, Mr Wan Hussin Zoonhri and myself, have decided that all the CCs of Aljunied GRC will eventually be affiliated to one another. The Kampong Kembangan spirit must be a part of a greater Aljunied spirit. And in the spirit of the three Musketeers of "all for one and one for all", Mr Chin and Mr Wan Hussin will help us in our fund-raising.

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