

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY BG (RES) GEORGE YONG-BOON YEO,
MINISTER OF STATE (FINANCE) AND (FOREIGN AFFAIRS),
AT THE CEREMONY FOR THE LAUNCHING OF A BOOK
"ONE PARTNERSHIP IN DEVELOPMENT - UNDP AND SINGAPORE"
AT MANDARIN HOTEL ON SATURDAY, 6 MAY 1989 AT 3.00 PM**

In New York last year, Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev told UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar that 'history is on your side'. The UN, it seems, has become a historical necessity. To adopt the Chinese formulation, we have become 'one world, many systems', many inter-connected systems.

The threat of a world nuclear holocaust has shocked humanity into a common consciousness that there are limits to national ambitions. To press national ambitions unilaterally beyond such limits must lead to national self-destruction.

There is also the threat now of environmental disaster, less urgent than the threat of a nuclear holocaust perhaps, but no less dangerous for the long-term prospects of human life on earth, and maybe more dangerous because it is insidious. The 'greens' are right to remind us that we all live in the same ark.

International organizations are necessary because we are crammed into the same ark, because the destinies of nations have become inextricably intertwined.

The UN is the most important world organization. It is not a world government. Whether it will ever become a world government no one can say. It is not likely to become

one for many years to come. But as the only universal body of sovereign nations, the UN will loom larger as the world becomes more populated, as national economies become more interdependent, and as science and technology draw us all closer together.

In this historic period, the UN plays a role that is edifying, humanizing and civilizing.

For Singapore, the UN has always been very important. We are a small, developing nation. The UN secures our place in the world community of nations. At the General Assembly, we have one vote, like other nations, big and small.

When Singapore was invited by the UN to take part in peacekeeping in Namibia by contributing to the civilian police component of the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), we considered it not only an honour but also a duty.

We have benefited greatly from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Dr Albert Winsemius, our national economic adviser for many years, came to Singapore under UNDP auspices.

The United Nations Association of Singapore was right to commission this research project on the UNDP in Singapore. The authors have done a good job. Singapore is grateful to the UNDP and we would like to see the success repeated by the UNDP in other developing countries. It gives me great pleasure to launch 'One Partnership in Development - UNDP and Singapore'.

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