

SPEECH BY MS GRACE FU, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION, AT THE 6th INTERNATIONAL FLORAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF SINGAPORE (FDSS) CUP FLORAL DESIGNING COMPETITION PRIZE PRESENTATION CEREMONY AT SUNTEC CITY CONVENTION CENTRE ON FRI, 25 JUL 2008 AT 7.00PM

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening. I am glad to be here today at the prize presentation ceremony of the 6th International FDSS Cup Floral Designing Competition. It is always a pleasure to attend events like this as they evoke much joy and happiness. Flowers are after all synonymous with many special occasions in our lives like weddings, birthdays and other festive celebrations.

Singapore – A Centre for Landscaping and Horticultural Excellence

2 The Singapore Garden Festival is back for its 2nd run

this year, after a successful inaugural showing in 2006 which attracted some 200,000 visitors. It is the only international garden show that features top award-winning garden and floral designers from around the world, showcasing their creations under one roof. This year, we are glad to have 34 acclaimed garden designers and master floral artists share the beauty of their creations with us at the Festival. We hope that the Festival will not only enhance our standing as a premier Garden City, but also inspire a greater love for gardening amongst our people, and foster greater community participation in the greening of our Garden City.

3 The Singapore Garden Festival is also significant as a platform for developing and promoting Singapore as a centre for landscaping and horticultural excellence. With a market that is poised to grow in the coming years, we are building up the capabilities of our industry to harness the opportunities that abound in the regional and international

market. This year, we have introduced a new trade and conference component to the Festival – the SGF Expo. This segment will serve as a useful platform for leading local and international practitioners to share best practices, gain insights into emerging industry trends, showcase their latest ideas and technologies, and explore new business opportunities.

4 The floral industry is a key component of our landscaping and horticultural industry. The expertise in floral arrangement and design has an important part to play in contributing towards Singapore's growth as a centre for horticultural excellence. Singapore's tropical location and climate has blessed us with a great diversity of plants and flowers. Designers can use this to their advantage to create beautiful floral designs and displays. Through the efforts of the FDSS in promoting the art of floral design, we can raise the standards of the floral industry, and enhance our

standing as a premier tropical Garden City.

Role and Significance of the Floral Designers Society of Singapore (FDSS) Competition

5 The International FDSS Cup Floral Designing Competition started in 1998, and over the years, the competition has evolved to become an important event on the local horticultural calendar. It is now held in conjunction with the biennial Singapore Garden Festival. The FDSS competition develops talent in the field of floral design, by nurturing and recognising individuals with a love for flowers and a flair for artistic design. This event also provides a platform for florists, floral designers, trade associates and floral enthusiasts to come together, network, exchange ideas, and be inspired by one another's creations. Competitions like this will give greater recognition to your profession and spur you to attain even higher standards in your craft.

Future Directions for FDSS

6 Besides doing a good job in sustaining the FDSS Cup over the last 10 years, the FDSS has been actively participating in various local and international events, hosting forums and floral shows, as well as presenting floral demonstrations. Through these activities, the FDSS has contributed towards a higher level of professionalism in our local floral design community, and raised the stature of Singapore in the field.

7 Going forward, I encourage the FDSS to continue to grow in the following three areas. First, the FDSS and its members should recognise that you have an important role to play as ambassadors in furthering our efforts and vision to transform Singapore into a City in a Garden. Do continue to share your interest and passion for floral design with your

friends, family and the community, so as to grow a larger pool of talents in the field.

8 Second, the FDSS can help the local floral industry attain even higher standards of professionalism by encouraging practitioners to constantly upgrade their skills to meet the evolving demands of the industry. This will not only increase public appreciation for floral design, but also lead to greater recognition for the floral industry.

9 And third, plug yourselves into the network of the international floral designers community. Participate and showcase your exceptional skills and talent in overseas events. Establish partnerships and exchanges with your overseas counterparts. This will allow you to gain expertise and experience, and open up more opportunities for our local floral industry to grow.

Concluding Remarks

10 In closing, I would like to congratulate the winners of this year's competition for their elegant and creative designs. I wish all of you an enjoyable time at the Singapore Garden Festival 2008. Have a great evening. Thank you.