

**WELCOME REMARKS BY MR NG LANG, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
NATIONAL PARKS BOARD, AT THE APPRECIATION PARTY AT THE
CLOSE OF SINGAPORE GARDEN FESTIVAL 2008 ON FRIDAY 1
AUGUST 2008 AT SUNTEC CONVENTION CENTRE LEVEL 6 AT
6:35PM**

Mr Mah Bow Tan, Minister for National Development,

Dr Maliki Osman, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National
Development

Mr Tan Tee How, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Development

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good evening

1. It is my pleasure to welcome everyone to this appreciation party at the close of the Singapore Garden Festival 2008.

2. I want to first thank our Guest-of-Honour, Minister Mah Bow Tan, for gracing the occasion this evening. Minister Mah has been a champion of the SGF since its inception and has provided a lot of support and guidance for this event. I believe this is the fourth time he is here at this event, and this time to celebrate the success of the Festival with us.

3 And this evening is indeed an occasion for celebration. By all indicators, SGF 2008 has been a resounding success:

- i) We have successfully incorporated SGF Expo, a trade and conference component to the event that attracted the participation of 20 countries.
- ii) We expect the visitorship for this event to be about 300,000 by the end of this evening. This is 100,000 more than the target we set for ourselves.
- iii) We hosted visits by members of almost the entire Cabinet.
- v) The feedback from visitors and professional participants has been overwhelmingly positive.

4. For all of you who are involved in the organising and running of the event, you know that this success is not to be taken for granted given the complexity of the entire event. This is a show that involves many shows, big and small, within a show. Altogether, there are more than 100 programmes, 400 organised groups and almost 30 countries participating in one way or another. This is not mentioning the 200,000 plants and 60,000 cut flowers that have to be taken care of on a daily basis. Success is only possible because every one of you, whatever you are in charge of, has taken it upon yourself to make it a success.

5. More than 3,000 people from various sectors are involved in SGF 2008 and it will not be possible for me to thank every single one of you by name. But broadly, I will like to acknowledge the contributions of the following partners.

Key Partners

6 First, I would like to thank the key partners who have helped us in the planning of the event in the past one-and-a-half years. These are representatives from the Singapore Tourism Board, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority, Dr John Elliot from the Orchid Society of Southeast Asia and Mr John Tan from the Singapore Gardening Society. It has been wonderful working with you and we will certainly wish to continue to count on your service in the next committee.

Sponsors

7 Second, I would like to thank the sponsors who have taken the risk to be pioneers to support the Festival both financially and in kind. Here, I would like to thank Larry Foo and his team from Clarins for the hard work they had put into the Learning Garden. This is a key attraction that has helped entertain and educate more than 6,000 young people about carbon footprint and environmental responsibility. We are also very grateful to CDL, Ikea, MediaCorp, Straits Times Life, Sony Singapore, Culina, ExxonMobil, Megu, Singapore Airlines, and SuperNature. We hope that your generous support for this event will lead the way for more corporations to support the SGF in future years.

Horticultural and Landscape Industry, and Partners

8 Third, I will like to thank the horticulture and landscape industry for giving this event your full support. We are all very proud to see the high

standard of our own garden designers and implementing partners at the show this year. You have made SGF 2008 a showcase of what our local industry is capable of doing when we rally together. I hope you will continue the momentum of the good work done here to continue to enhance the standard of the industry.

9 I am also very grateful for the help of Henry Steed and members of the Singapore Institute of Landscape Architects, and Veera Sekaran and members of the Landscape Industry Association of Singapore. I hope to continue to count on your support to build on the SGF Expo as a platform to engage the global landscape and horticulture industry.

Societies and Volunteers

10 Fourth, I would like to thank the schools, societies and community gardeners for adding a very active community participation dimension to this show. You are the heart and soul of the show, and we will look forward to strengthening this partnership with you in future shows.

11 We are in particular grateful to Mdm Heng, Principal of Nanyang Primary School, and the committee of parent volunteers who organized the Inter-school Creative Floral Art Competition. This year, the competition attracted the participation of 35 schools and added a layer of dynamic youthful energy to this show. Likewise, we want to thank Zoe Ong and members of Floral Designers Society (Singapore) for organising the International FDSS Cup Foral Design Competition.

12 In addition, I would like to convey our thanks to:

- a. Vilma D'Rozario and members of Cicada Tree Eco-Place
- b. Floriculture Association Singapore
- c. Green Culture Singapore
- d. Ikebana International Singapore Chapter 135
- e. Institute of Parks and Recreation (Singapore)
- f. Kranji Countryside Association
- g. Nanyang Orchid Association
- h. Nature Society (Singapore)
- i. Ngee Ann Polytechnic
- j. Orchid Business Cluster
- k. Photographic Society of Singapore
- l. Singapore Arboriculture Society
- m. Singapore Environment Council
- n. Singapore Florist Association
- o. Singapore Flowers Exporters' Association
- p. Singapore Hortiflora Federation
- q. Singapore Orchid Growers' Association
- r. Singapore Penjing and Stone Appreciation Society
- s. Singapore Society for Soiless Culture

13 For me, an unforgettable memory of SGF2008 will be of the three elderly ladies from Jurong Central who spent many days here tirelessly sharing gardening tips and generously giving out seeds and plants from their gardens to visitors. For those of you who have visited the Community

in Bloom section, I am sure you have all been likewise inspired by the love and passion for gardening of our volunteers. For this, we have to thank:

- Association for People with Special Needs
- Catholic High School
- Ivory Heights Condominium
- Jurong Central Zone 'G' RC
- Marine Crescent Ville RC
- Opera Estate Neighbourhood Committee
- Pasir Ris Zone 5 RC
- Seletar Hills West Neighbourhood Committee
- Yokogawa Engineering Asia Pte Ltd

Media and Service Providers

14 Fifth, I would like to thank our local and international media for your support for this event. Your wonderful coverage of the festival has been critical in the success of the event.

15 Likewise, we are very happy to have the privilege of working with the capable teams from Grey Singapore, Hill and Knowlton, PICO, MP and Suntec. The success of this show would not have been possible without your specialized support.

Awards Gala Committee

16 Sixth, I would like to thank my Chairman, Mrs Christina Ong, for leading a very accomplished team of ladies including Mrs Theresa Foo, Mrs Elen Fu, and Mrs Mekani to organise the Awards Gala for the Festival. Besides helping to raise more than \$600,000 for the event, the Gala has also added a touch of glamour to SGF. In fact, quite a few of the garden designers were very dazzled by the Gala and confessed that they had never attended a show quite as glamorous as ours.

NParks staff and others

17 Last but not least, I would like to say a big thank you to my NParks colleagues. I want to thank Wei Har and her team, for having almost flawlessly planned and coordinated the execution of the event. I also want to thank the rest of NParks for rallying to lend your support. From senior staff like Dr Kiat Tan to the most junior, from frontline staff to herbarium researchers to admin staff, each of you has rolled up your sleeves, contributed what you can, and worked as a team to help make this a world-class show. Some staff even roped in their family members to help. Mdm Ho, Mak's mother, was here everyday to make herbal tea for those who need a boost. I drank several cups of it myself. I do not know whether the herbal part worked but and I have to say that it certainly helped warm my heart. Before the show, we said that the most important indicator of success is we must enjoy ourselves during this show. And I hope you have enjoyed yourselves as much as I have in the past two weeks.

18 I also need to thank the small NParks team who has stayed back to hold the fort, who has to work doubly hard to make sure that our routine operations still function while the rest of us are held here in Suntec.

Thanks to your good work, I still received emails from the public in the past week thanking NParks for services that we have rendered in various areas.

19 There are many more of you I have not been able to mention, who have helped us in one way or another. All of us in NParks would like to express our sincere thanks for your help and to be with us this evening.

20 And to everyone, my colleagues and I look forward to your continued support for the next Singapore Garden Festival in 2010 and beyond.

21 I wish everyone a pleasant evening.