

Speech by Ms Tan Puay Hoon, President of Restroom
Association (Singapore)

A very good afternoon to our Guest of Honour Dr. Amy Khor, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, distinguished service leaders, volunteers and friends.

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome all of you. Today is not just the launch of our LOO Campaign but also a celebration of World Toilet Day with theme, "We deserve better". Under that theme, World Toilet Day will be drawing everyone's attention to three key 'We' statements. "We deserve better social status" is the first statement highlighting the need to change public perception of the image and status of toilets. "We deserve better pay, respect and prospects" is the second "We" aimed at recognising the efforts of toilets cleaners and according them their necessary dues. The third "We" speaks on behalf of 2.5 billion people, disadvantaged by the lack of proper sanitation facilities. Hence the aptly titled "We deserve a better

place to defecate, a toilet” forms the third statement of a three-fold approach to “We deserve better”.

Since 1998, RAS advocates having clean public toilet for everyone and has made it its mission to help Singapore achieve a world standard in toilet cleanliness. We believe that toilet owners, users and cleaners have a combined effort to play in keeping our toilets clean.

The primary aim of the LOO Campaign is to raise awareness of the importance of clean public toilets and to certify 70% of our public toilets to at least a 3-star standard by 2010. A 3-star standard means the toilet must be dry, clean & odourless.

There are about 35,000 toilet blocks in Singapore and the challenge will be to cover all sectors. From shopping centres, sports complexes, all Food and Beverage providers like coffee shops and hawker centres to nature parks, tourist attractions and other places the public frequent, the required support is necessary to empower cleaners, users and employers to take a stand.

Through this campaign, we hope to see the commitment from the toilet owners to provide not just quality service but also provide quality toilets for their customers. We also hope to work with the cleaning industry to employ best practices to upgrade the cleaners' skills and welfare. Lastly we would like to see all toilet users adopt good toilet etiquette and appreciate the provision of clean toilets.

The Happy Toilets Program – the star grading system will set the cleanliness and hygiene standard for all public toilets. We have revamped the program in terms of process and fee structure so as to give the flexibility for all establishments to participate regardless of size.

In order to sustain this grading program, RAS has launched a pilot program with the support of NEA and NTUC to train Certified Eco Assessors and Volunteer Eco Assessors. These assessors will undergo our structured training program together with a test at the end of training before we start them on Happy Toilet Assessment. It is important to maintain the standard and consistency throughout the assessment. We have

adopted a community approach and are working with all the 5 CDC to recruit housewives, retirees, etc from their districts. After training we will deploy them to assess toilet in their respective district. Today we are going to present our 38 VEAs and 8 CEAs.

The school education program, another pillar of the RAS has been in effect since 2005. We have reached out to over 210 primary and secondary and 50 over pre-school. Participating students are exposed to knowledge about personal hygiene, health and project ideas, along with paying homage to social responsibility and ownership of school property. It is our belief that education and awareness is important and requires a long term commitment. We have seen more young people interested to work and volunteer their services on toilet related projects.

As our exhibition booths at the back will show, new initiatives are being introduced to coincide with today's launch. Our current Happy Toilet School Education program will now see a more dynamic, hands on approach. A new school program called **ACTIONS** or **Appreciating Clean Toilets In Our**

Neighbourhood and School will no longer confine students to just in-school activities. Students will be encouraged to appreciate and undertake projects aimed at improving standards of toilets in their neighbourhood. A tie up with public organisations like the Society for the Physically Disabled would see students dedicating their time to decorate and improve the facilities there. Schools will also be strongly encouraged to participate in our HTP to have their toilets professionally accredited to meet national standards.

The LOO Campaign is an island wide project and RAS will need many volunteers to help us to achieve our target. Today we have many volunteers with us to organise this launch. We thank their time and effort and share the same vision as RAS and look forward to their continued support.

We would like to thank our event sponsor Initial Hygiene who has been supporting many of our programs over the years, our product sponsors Freshening Industries, Universal Sovereign and Stabilo; sponsor for the prizes for the school competition. We would like to thank the Zoo for not only being our venue

sponsor, but also our participating organisation as well. The zoo, under the Wildlife Reserves Singapore umbrella, has committed to upgrade all public toilet participated our HTP. I have seen their toilets and am convinced that they provide excellent customer service and leave a lasting impression on visitors who come to experience the fine services provided by them. Their open concept toilets are a benchmark to aspire towards and definitely compliment their world class attractions.

Last but not least, a big thank you to our GOH. Despite her very tight schedule, she has still come to grace the event. We appreciate your presence and your support on our programs over years and look forward to your continued endorsement of our initiatives. We once again thank all our participating organisations, supporters and sponsors present here today. All of you have demonstrated the commitment we seek for the launch of this campaign and that is the first major hurdle we have overcome today. This landmark occasion is the stepping stone for greater initiatives to be set forth. Let us all work together to ensure that clean toilets in Singapore is everyone's business.