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**WELCOME SPEECH BY MR ZAINUDIN NORDIN MAYOR
CENTRAL SINGAPORE DISTRICT AND CHAIRMAN
ONEPEOPLE.SG AT THE NATIONAL ORANGE RIBBON
CELEBRATIONS ON 18 JULY 2009 AT BISHAN ACTIVE**

Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew

Ministers

Fellow Mayors

Parliamentary Colleagues

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to this year's National Orange Ribbon Celebrations.

2 The National Orange Ribbon Celebrations was inaugurated in July last year by OnePeople and its community partners, as an annual signature event for racial and religious harmony celebrations.

3 This year, more than 80 community activities have been organised islandwide in conjunction with the Celebrations, bringing people of different races and religions together to appreciate our cultural diversity. Today, we are honoured to have Minister Mentor

Lee Kuan Yew join us for the celebrations. It will be a privilege to hear his thoughts, and experiences on the role of racial harmony in the progress and stability that we enjoy today.

4 It is no coincidence that the National Orange Ribbon Celebrations takes place at a sporting venue such as the Bishan Active. Sport has the power to unite humanity beyond the cultural boundaries of race, language, and religion, in a way that little else can. Singapore will host the first-ever Youth Olympic Games (YOG) in August next year, and this milestone is an excellent opportunity to showcase our diverse culture and people.

5 The Orange Ribbon movement hopes to kick-start the momentum for the upcoming Games by celebrating the Olympic ideals of Excellence, Friendship and Respect, which is embodied in our chosen theme of “Many Races, One Gracious Community”. A nationwide pledge drive was launched on 1 July for Singaporeans to express their personal commitments on Racial Harmony and the Olympic Values of Excellence, Respect and Friendship. In such a short time, we have managed to rally more than 150, 000 pledges from Singaporeans of all ages and backgrounds for this call to action, and our pledges will be preserved as a symbol of harmony and graciousness to be unveiled later.

6 All this could not have been achieved without the commitment from our key partners, and I would to like thank the Community Development Councils, People’s Association, Self-Help Groups,

Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education and the Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee for joining hands with OnePeople to make this event possible. I would also like to thank the Singapore Totalisator Board, Public Utilities Board, Lee Foundation, Gardenia and Bishan-Toa Payoh North Citizens Consultative Committee for their generous donations and support.

I wish you an enjoyable afternoon ahead. Thank You.