

OPENING SPEECH FOR PROFESSOR TAN CHORH CHUAN
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GREEN CARNIVAL 2008: NUS FIGHTS CLIMATE CHANGE
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
25 – 27 AUGUST 2008

Dr Amy Khor, Mayor of South West District and Senior Parliamentary Secretary for
Ministry of Environment and Water Resources

Mr Lee Yuen Hee, CEO, National Environment Agency

Distinguished Guests,

Colleagues, students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

1 Good afternoon and thank you for joining us for the opening of NUS' Green Carnival 2008. In particular, I would like to thank Dr Amy Khor for gracing this occasion,

2 The theme of this year's green carnival is climate change. The Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) last year provides a clear scientific consensus on the issue. The Earth's climate is changing as a result of greenhouse gas emissions from human activities. Climate change, if unmitigated, has serious implications on human growth and development.

3 Against this backdrop, a high level Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development was set up in early February. The committee will formulate a national framework and strategy for Singapore's sustainable development in the context of emerging domestic and global challenges. This initiative augments Singapore's National Climate Change Committee, which is chaired by Dr Amy Khor. The National Climate Change Committee is tasked to address the various aspects of climate change, which includes vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation.

NUS and Climate Action

4 As a global university, NUS too should play an active leadership role with respect to climate change. As a community, we can strategize and organize effective action. As a research-intensive institution, we can reduce our own emissions of greenhouse gases. We can also direct scholarly attention to important issues related to climate change. As a seat of learning, we can educate our students about climate change.

5 I am glad that as a community, we have been taking many active steps in these directions. The NUS Campus Sustainability Committee, or CSC, is working to establish a baseline inventory that enumerates the sources of greenhouse emissions associated with NUS. Among other things, direct emissions that are generated within NUS campus for powering our vehicle fleet, and indirect emissions resulting from our energy usage in our buildings will be tracked and monitored.

6 Establishing a NUS greenhouse gas inventory enables us to develop a baseline and will help us to identify specific areas and emission trends, where emission reductions and energy-efficiency increases can have the greatest impact. This inventory and the monitoring of trends will give us a basis for formulating a sound, strategic climate action programme, particularly in the area of energy management.

7 Besides providing leadership in enhancing the sustainability of our operations, CSC will support and develop connections between faculty, graduate and undergraduate research and education on environment and sustainability. Through our \$150,000 Earth Fund, we will support research projects and initiatives that capitalize on the campus environment., that create a nexus between the local campus environment and sustainability issues.

Ongoing Sustainability Efforts in NUS

8 At the Green Carnival last October, Dr Khor, Mr Lee and Mr Joseph Mullinix, NUS Deputy President for Administration, launched the setting of air-conditioning temperatures in NUS to 25°C. At the same time, stickers with energy conservation messages were also distributed to NUS offices and departments to serve as a reminder.

9 In early February this year, our NUS Students' Union launched their Environmental Charter, with the help of NUS Provost, Professor Tan Eng Chye,. By promoting environmental stewardship, resource conservation and education in their union activities, events and services, we hope to groom our student leaders as role models in NUS and beyond.

10 In conjunction with the launch of the Environmental Charter, SAVE, together with CSC, NUS COOP and Office of Estate and Development, launched the Rebate2Earth initiative to reduce plastic bags in NUS COOP bookstores, fruit and drink stalls in our canteens. This initiative, which requires customers to pay 10 cents for every plastic bag used, saw plastic bag consumption decrease by more than 80% in participating outlets.

11 In March, under the SAVE3s project, SAVE worked with NUS Computer Centre, NUS Libraries and various computer clusters on campus to default printers to double-sided printing. Concurrently, the Office of Provost has also strongly supported the submission of all academic assignments for undergraduate and graduate studies on double-sided print or through electronic submission.

12 In April, as part of Zer0waste project, CSC engaged all the halls and residences to promote paper recycling at the end of the academic semester. To further promote recycling, surveys were also undertaken by student interns under the guidance of CSC to look into issues relating to the recycling habits, appropriate use of recycling bins, and location of these bins on campus.

13 I am very proud that our student leaders, from SAVE, together with CSC, have been very proactive in engaging other stakeholders of the university. They have taken the initiative to lead the community to address the issues and challenges of climate change through the Green Carnival and the comprehensive range of projects that will be launched and renewed today – *Zer0Waste*, *1 Degree Up*, *Rebate2Earth*, *SAVE3s*, *Food4Thought* and *Sustainable Office Programme*. Their passion, commitment and hard work are highly commendable and is an inspiration for the rest of our community. I would like to encourage all our faculty members, staff, and students to support these important environmental projects as well as to initiate new environmental programmes on campus.

Looking Ahead

14 At this juncture, I would like to express my thanks to the student leaders in SAVE and CSC for organizing the Green Carnival 2008 and for bravely taking on the six campus-wide environmental projects in the coming year. I would also like to thank all our sponsors, NEA, City Developments Limited, Nokia, TES-AMM, Sembawang Shipyard and Senoko Power, for your generosity in supporting this meaningful event.

15 In concluding, I would like to share a quote from the ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle: “*All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.*” At NUS, we are committed to help our youth, the leaders of tomorrow, achieve their greatest potential. In a global university, this education must include a strong appreciation of, and sensitivity to, issues of great global importance such as climate change.

16 I urge my fellow colleagues and our students and student leaders to be proactive and to do our part for our planet. We cannot afford to wait.

17 On this note, I wish all of you an enjoyable and fruitful experience at the Green Carnival.

Thank you.