STATEMENT BY MR LAWRENCE WONG, MINISTER FOR CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND YOUTH AT 39TH SESSION OF THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE IN BONN, GERMANY, 4 JULY 2015

Madam Chairperson
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Singapore is deeply honoured to have the Singapore Botanic Gardens inscribed as our very first World Heritage Site. For a small island state like Singapore, all of 700 square kilometres, I must say this is also a very humbling experience, especially coming right after two great civilisations of the world – China and Iran. I thank the Chairperson and all the members of the World Heritage Committee for the unanimous and wholehearted endorsement of the recommendation. I thank the professional bodies of ICOMOS and IUCN for their hard work in reviewing and supporting the sites. And I also thank and congratulate the Chairperson and the government of the Federal Republic of Germany for all the arrangements and warm hospitality in arranging this meeting.

2. The Gardens has always been well-loved and cherished by all Singaporeans. And now, we are very proud to have it recognised as a site worthy of exceptional value for humanity. This inscription is especially meaningful for us, as we celebrate our 50th year as an independent nation. It is a wonderful Golden Jubilee present for the whole nation. It is also an accolade that will resonate deeply with Singaporeans as we come together this year to reflect on our heritage, our identity and our place in the world.

3. Today's inscription seals our commitment to conserve and to protect the Gardens for posterity - for Singaporeans, and for the whole world. We pledge to do our part to preserve and safeguard world heritage. We pledge to give our continued full support for UNESCO's important mission and work. And finally, let me invite everyone to visit, at your own convenience, the Singapore Botanic Gardens – our first ever World Heritage site. Thank you very much.

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