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## NEWS RELEASE

### **ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN & CEO MR WEE CHO YAW AT UOB RECEPTION TO CELEBRATE SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION ON 17 JUNE 2002**

**Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Board of Directors of United Overseas Bank, I wish all of you a very warm welcome to this reception to mark the successful integration of UOB and OUB.

From today the two banks operate as one in Singapore and in 17 other countries. Our customers will be able to transact their banking business with greater ease and convenience through our combined branches, ATMs, Call Centre, and Internet. Customers will also enjoy common products and services such as credit cards, CashPlus, as well as deposit and loan facilities at the same rates.

We started work last October to rationalise and streamline the operations of the two banks. The exercise was expected to take 12 to 18 months. I am pleased that our team only took eight months to complete the complex project. This means that we are on track to achieve cost savings of about \$250 million from the consolidation of the two banks.

I want to say "Thank you" to everyone involved in the Bank and to our consultants. Special mention must be made of the hard work and dedication of our Heads of IT and Branches and their teams, who have spent many sleepless nights to beat the deadline. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the regulatory bodies in Singapore, Malaysia and in the other countries where we have operations, for facilitating the merger of the two banks.

My deep appreciation also goes to all our customers for their understanding and patience over the past few months. We have tried very hard to ensure that the integration work does not affect the standard of our customer service. But given the scope of the integration exercise -- for instance, we have brought together some 200 application systems and close to 2,000 online interfaces -- some hiccups could not be avoided. I apologise for any inconvenience you might have experienced in the past couple of months.

The Singapore banking landscape has become more competitive in the last decade. Competition will increase with further liberalisation of the banking sector. To meet the new challenges UOB will continually upgrade our IT systems, introduce innovative products and provide quality service at competitive pricing. With the successful consolidation of UOB and OUB, I strongly believe that we will maintain market share and compete effectively in Singapore.

But Singapore is a limited market. While UOB has grown with Singapore for the last 67 years, we will need to look overseas for our future growth. So even as we continue to retain our market share in Singapore, we will further expand our business activities in the region and in Greater China. In doing so, we will strive to help our corporate customers, and especially the SMEs, to grow their business overseas.

In conclusion, I would like to invite all the Directors of the UOB Board to come on stage and join me in a toast to the good health and happiness of everyone here, as well as to UOB's Honorary Counsellor for Life, Dr Lien Ying Chow, who is unable to join us this evening.

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