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**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MR LEE YOCK SUAN,
MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY
AND SECOND MINISTER FOR FINANCE,
AT THE OPENING OF COMDEX ASIA '97
ON TUESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 1997 AT 9.30 AM
AT SUNTEC CITY AUDITORIUM**

The Asia-Pacific is the fastest growing market in the world for information technology (IT) products. The market is growing at 35 per cent per annum. Governments and businesses in the region are eager to harness IT to boost their economic competitiveness. Last year, the Asia-Pacific accounted for 24 per cent of the world's US\$610 billion IT market, behind Western Europe at 27 per cent and the USA at 42 per cent. By the Year 2000, the Asia-Pacific is expected to overtake Europe as the world's second largest IT market after the USA.

The Asia-Pacific is fast emerging as an IT powerhouse. In 1995, six of the top ten IT exporters were from the Asia-Pacific region. Together, they produced 58 per cent of global IT products.

Singapore ONE

With the tremendous growth potential of IT, many Asia-Pacific countries have ambitious plans to develop their IT industries and infrastructure. In

Singapore, we have materialised some of our plans to transform Singapore into a so-called 'Intelligent Island'. In June this year, our Prime Minister launched, on a pilot basis, a nation-wide, multimedia, broadband network known as 'Singapore ONE' meaning 'One Network for Everyone'. With this and other measures, we aim to develop Singapore as the IT Hub of this region.

The public's response to Singapore ONE has exceeded expectations. By the end of this month, some 2,000 households and businesses would have been connected to Singapore ONE. With the good response, we will easily reach our target of 5,000 households and businesses by the end of the year. We have set up two Singapore ONE Clubs at public places with five more in the pipeline.

New applications and services are continually being added to Singapore ONE. I am pleased to announce the launch of 24 new applications today, in addition to 60 that are already on-line. With such strong interest and support, we are confident of achieving our target of 100 Singapore ONE applications by the end of the year.

Some of the new applications being launched today include:

- (i) An on-line meteorological service that provides 24-hour weather forecasts of Singapore and major Asian cities in a 3-dimensional or 3-D presentation;
- (ii) An electronic service for motorists that features 3-D multimedia clips of new car models and test reviews, a database of cars available in Singapore, and online shopping for car-care products;
- (iii) An on-line music education service targeted at children aged

between 6 and 12 years of age; and

(iv) An interactive virtual tour of the Singapore Discovery Centre which showcases Singapore's milestones and achievements over the years.

IT Mega Hub

Singapore ONE has attracted investments from many of the world's leading companies in this field. We will capitalise on the various innovations and attractions to develop Singapore into an IT Mega Hub.

Initially, we will focus on three main areas, namely:

(i) a communications and media hub;

(ii) an electronic commerce hub; and

(iii) an IT innovation hub.

Let me highlight some of the programmes we have initiated to build up our position as an IT Mega Hub.

In the case of content and applications, our multilingual capabilities place us in an advantageous position to be a hub for both English and Asian content. We provide a conducive environment for English content to be customised or repackaged for Asian audiences, and for Asian content to be developed for English-speaking consumers. We have attracted leading players in the business information and broadcast arenas to host their content creation and distribution operations in Singapore. Examples include Reuters, Dow Jones, Yahoo!, Alta

Vista, Disney, Discovery Channel and ESPN Sports.

We are also capitalising on our strengths in international trade, education, law and medicine to develop content and applications in these fields for regional and global consumption.

The one-stop SingaporeConnect web site, which was set up last year, now has data on more than a quarter million companies. This rich repository of business information enables companies world-wide to source for suitable partners more quickly. Plans are afoot to link this web site with the G7's database of small and medium enterprises, to facilitate international business partnerships.

We launched the Electronic Commerce Hotbed last year to test electronic commerce applications in Singapore. To date, there are about 120 such applications for electronic transactions with government departments, home shopping, access to news and information services, and bureau services.

We have also embarked on a number of projects to deliver secure payment and electronic identification systems to facilitate electronic commerce. For example, we are testing a Secure Electronic Transaction system that supports on-line payment on credit using both Visa and MasterCard.

Recently, we implemented a nation-wide infrastructure for electronic identification. Based on digital certificates and a pair of cryptographic keys stored on a smart card, it allows secure identification and transactions to be carried out in a "face-less" network environment.

Since the launch of the Innovation Development Scheme (IDS) last year,

some 50 local IT companies have been given financial assistance to develop innovative solutions. Singapore ONE and other flagship projects have also attracted leading technology companies to invest in Singapore to develop innovative technologies and applications for the regional and global markets.

Telecommunications Infrastructure

Singapore's efficient and reliable telecommunications infrastructure has made it a switching node for regional and international voice and data traffic. We are studying the feasibility of linking Singapore ONE to countries that have similar broadband networks so as to share content and applications.

We have also established two high-speed T3 links to the USA to enable faster Internet traffic between Singapore and the USA. Through these links, popular content from the USA can be downloaded and mirrored in Singapore more efficiently, and Asian content hosted in Singapore can be transmitted more quickly to consumers in the USA and the West. We are now exploring extension of similar high-speed links to Europe and other regions.

We are also working on the policy and legal framework for IT commerce, on standardisation and IT security. Today I am pleased to announce the setting up of a Singapore Computer Emergency Response Team (SingCERT) as a one-stop centre for co-ordinating emergency responses to security incidents. SingCERT's charter is to facilitate the prevention, detection and resolution of security-related incidents. It is a collaborative effort between the National Computer Board and The National University of Singapore, with the support of the Online Technologies Consortium. The establishment of SingCERT is expected to give the industry confidence in deploying services over the Internet and Singapore ONE.

The IT revolution that is sweeping the world offers many exciting opportunities and challenges. We need to gear up for it. I am happy that Singapore is able to play an active role in this process in collaboration with the international community. Although competition is inevitable, there are many areas where we can pool our resources and achieve synergy.

Finally, I would like to wish the organisers and all participants of Comdex Asia '97 a most fruitful and enjoyable conference and exhibition.

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