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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Dr John Chen, 23 Jan 1999 at 2.30pm

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY DR JOHN CHEN

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR HONG KAH GRC

AT THE SEMINAR ON EFFECTIVE PARENTING AT DUNEARN

SECONDARY SCHOOL, 21 BUKIT BATOK WEST AVE 2,

ON SATURDAY, 23 JANUARY 1999 AT 2.30 PM

Good afternoon, Mrs Catherine Seah, Principal of Dunearn Secondary School, teachers, parents, ladies and gentlemen.

2 Parenting is more than just providing food and accommodation to our children. It is about instilling proper values and positive attitudes in our youths to nurture them as future useful and responsible citizens of the nation. Our youths

are the future of our country. It depends heavily on how well we educate and mould them. The responsibility for good upbringing of our youths therefore depends heavily on us, the parents.

3 Singapore youths face more pressure today than we faced in the past. Today's youths are exposed to many different forms of temptation and influence. Changing family structure, dual career families, global media influences, divorce rate and negative peer pressure all serve to undermine the discipline, work attitude and moral values of our youths. As parents, we should be sensitive to the character development of our children and closely monitor external influences that may affect the development of our children. This will enable parents to recognise any indifferent or undesired behaviour early and take action before it is too late.

4 Parental role modelling and a warm, caring home environment are two vital elements in the development of any child. During the economic downturn, families undergo greater stress. Nevertheless, parents cannot overlook the importance of providing a caring environment for their children. A conducive environment is very important as it encourages children to share their feelings with their parents, thus creating better rapport and improving communication between them.

5 Juvenile delinquency is a serious social problem that demands the immediate attention of the society. Secondary school students are especially vulnerable as they can be easily influenced by others and are constantly surrounded by many different types of influences and temptations. At that age, they are also beginning to undergo physical and emotional changes, which can be unsettling to some. Therefore, it is important to reach out to parents with young teens, because they are in a better position to identify any delinquent behaviour.

6 I am pleased to note that the Sembawang-Hong Kah Community Development Council will continue its effort to reach out to parents by working with schools to organise seminars like this to share with parents on the importance of Parent-Child communication, how to deal with your children, and to let you know on how and where to find help.

7 Having attended the seminar, I hope you will pass on lessons learnt to your friends. I hope that with the lesson learnt today, you will become more confident and effective parents. This tripartite collaboration linking parents, schools, and grassroots organisations fits into MOE's current thrust of involving more parents in school activities.

8 On behalf of all project partners, I express our appreciation to today's speaker, who will share with us insights on how to communicate with your child effectively and issues on effective parenting. Finally, I wish everyone here a fruitful and enjoyable seminar.

9 Thank you.