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Subject: Speech by Assoc Prof Ho Peng Kee, 20 Feb 99, 10am

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY ASSOC PROF HO PENG KEE, MINISTER OF STATE FOR

LAW AND HOME AFFAIRS AT THE "REUNION VIDEO CONFERENCE WITH SINGAPOREANS IN MICHIGAN, 20 FEBRUARY 1999 AT 10AM

FAMILY TIES, SINGAPORE BONDS

First, let me wish all our Singaporean friends here and those in Michigan a very happy Lunar New Year. I am glad to be here to celebrate this auspicious occasion with all of you.

2 In this high-tech age, the wonders of technology makes it possible for family and friends who are oceans apart to celebrate an important festival such as Chinese New Year together.

3 Now, those of you in Michigan can say hello and send New Year greetings to your parents and friends back home in Singapore, and vice versa. I am sure it is a wonderful feeling for everyone. Family ties and friendships can be strengthened at a time like this.

4 Technology such as the Internet also brings you the latest news at a touch of a finger. Many of you would have read of the economic crisis that has hit this region. Those of you who are returning soon to work in Singapore are probably worried about what it means for you.

5 Well, please be assured that the Government has proactively taken steps to deal with the economic situation. Our fundamentals are sound. We will recover and move ahead. And, whilst doing this, we will also look ahead, beyond the current economic situation, towards our vision of becoming a knowledge-based economy in the new millennium.

6 For those of you who are studying and working overseas, what you learn and experience, the skills you acquire, contacts you make, or ties that you nurture will all be very valuable when you return to Singapore and start contributing and adding value to our economy.

7 Fresh graduates may take a while to find out exactly what you are looking for, career wise. But if you keep an open mind, have realistic expectations and focus on acquiring valuable work experience, you will find ways around the difficulties.

8 And, by all means, tap all the help and support available when you are overseas. For example, CONTACT SINGAPORE is a good source to turn to, especially if you want to know what's happening back home. CONTACT SINGAPORE cares.

9 This event is a good example. CONTACT SINGAPORE has organised this reunion video conference together with Singapore Students from the University of Michigan, to show that it looks after the interests of overseas Singapore students. So please make full use of CONTACT SINGAPORE when you are abroad.

10 In a nutshell, home is where the heart is. Home is also where the family is. Though miles separate Singaporeans who are living or studying all over the world from home, at this time of the Lunar New Year celebrations, I hope they will reaffirm that their heart is with Singapore. So keep in touch. Be our ambassadors abroad. Extend our friendship and goodwill to the world. Strengthen Singapore with the contacts and networking, skills and expertise that you pick up whilst overseas.

11 Well, I know all of you are very eager to exchange greetings with each other, So, let me end by wishing all of you again "Xin Nian Kuai Le, Wan Shi Ru Yi". Let us hope the year of the sprightly Rabbit will usher in an upturn in our economic performance, showering brighter prospects and a fruitful year for everyone.

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