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SPEECH BY MR MOHAMAD MAIDIN PACKER MOHD, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (EDUCATION) AT THE IT IN EDUCATION SEMINAR AT MAHA BODHI SCHOOL ON SATURDAY 13 MAR 99 AT 9.00 AM

Good morning, principals, teachers, ladies and gentlemen. I am very delighted to see so many of you here this morning participating in the IT in Education Seminar, on the first day of your first school vacation this year.

2 The IT in Education Seminar, participated by all IT Demo Schools, was first held on 8 Sep 1997. The success of this seminar in providing teachers the opportunity to share their best practices in the use of IT in their classrooms, led to the mounting of more such professional sharing sessions among teachers from different schools. And in line with the goals of the Masterplan for IT in Education to develop teachers, expand and enrich the learning environment, Phase 2 schools were strongly encouraged to organise or participate in such seminars.

3 It is heartening to note that to-date, as many as seventeen primary and secondary schools in Phase 2 of the Masterplan implementation have accepted the challenge to host IT in Education Seminars for 1998 and 1999. The seventeen seminars involve the participation of about 100 Phase 2, as well as demo and even some Phase 3 schools.

4 These seminars will provide opportunities for teachers to share evolving and creative use of new technologies in classrooms, to learn from one another, to promote collaboration as well as create a self-sustaining mechanism for future seminars and professional sharings.

5 I would like to commend the six participating primary schools: Changkat, Loyang, Maha Bodhi, Pasir Ris, Qiaonan and Tampines, for jointly organising today's seminar, and to the Principal of Maha Bodhi School, Mr Chew Chong Theng, and his staff for graciously hosting the occasion.

6 May I also take this opportunity to congratulate all teachers and their pupils who have worked very hard and spent time to put together some 30 presentations today. This seminar showcases your efforts in innovative processes in teaching and learning. I'm happy that many of your presentations today, will not only include sharing and demo lessons on the use of IT in key subjects, but also in the Mother Tongue Languages, national education, art and the aesthetics. The range of presentations shows that teachers have successfully infused IT in most subject areas and across all levels.

7 Your efforts will bring us closer to our objective to create an IT culture in schools, whereby teachers from various schools could share their classroom practices, expertise, ideas and resources with one another. This seminar is indeed an opportunity for all to learn and from one another. It will also provide a platform for networking among schools, to engage in professional dialogue and promote future collaborative projects.

8 1999 will be another exciting year for the Phase 2 schools. In the area of teacher development, you will be receiving a budget from the Masterplan Project for IT training for your teachers. Schools can use the funds innovatively, to organise IT related courses for their teachers, to send teachers to Conferences both at home and abroad, or even to attend online training courses.

9 Almost all the Phase 2 primary schools have achieved the start-up computer pupil ratio of 6.6:1 and will be getting their school-wide network by this year. The extensive networking in schools will also bring about new ways of collaborating and school management, and open up new possibilities in the use of IT for teaching and learning.

10 We are moving closer to our goal of providing every school with an integrated IT infra-structure to enable teaching and learning to take place anywhere and anytime, to promote collaborative group work, and enable virtual consultation with peers or experts.

11 In conclusion, I hope that all participants of this Seminar will find the sessions stimulating and rewarding. You will return to your schools encouraged and reassured you that you are on the right track; inspired and eager to meet the challenges of exploring new technologies for teaching and learning.

12 I wish you all an exciting and fruitful time ahead.

13 It is now my pleasure to declare the IT in Education Seminar, jointly organised by the six primary schools - open.

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