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SPEECH BY MR MOHAMAD MAIDIN PACKER MOHD, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, AT
THE INTER-SECONDARY SCHOOLS GENERAL AFFAIRS
QUIZ & HISTORICAL HUNT FINALS AT SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC ON 10 APRIL 1999 AT 3.00 PM

Mr Low Wong Fook, Principal, Singapore Polytechnic,

Lecturers, Teachers, Students and Guests

1. I am very happy to be here this afternoon to address you at the finals of the 3rd Inter-Secondary Schools General Affairs Quiz and Historical Hunt 1999 organised by the Current Affairs and Debating Club of the Singapore Polytechnic. This year, a total of 88 teams from 65 secondary schools participated in the event.

2. It is heartening to see students of the Polytechnic continuing to maintain a keen interest in general knowledge, current affairs and National Education issues. In an era of increasing globalisation and interdependence, the acquisition of

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technological knowledge cannot be the sole aim of a Polytechnic education. Students must be able to think independently and creatively, so as to have confidence and conviction when facing adversity or uncertainty. We need to mould "all-rounded technologists" with a global mindset, and who are attuned to the changes in the world around us.

3. The last time this Quiz was organised in 1997, our economy was experiencing strong growth, and there was every reason to be optimistic. Today the region is going through great economic and social upheaval. Now, more than ever, we need to be aware of our national constraints and vulnerabilities but also acknowledge our unique characteristics and strengths. In order to think global, but remain rooted in Singapore, we need to know Singapore and understand the factors that shape our existence and define the options open to us. To prepare our students for future challenges, education in the new millennium will need to develop our young as whole persons - morally, intellectually, physically, socially and aesthetically.

4. This Quiz is a useful step in our aim of whole-person education. It demonstrates that education need not be restricted to classroom learning. For example, in the Historical Hunt segment of the Quiz, the participants were required to journey to 25 sites of historical and national significance to deepen their understanding of our heritage and our origins. The Quiz has not only provided participants with the opportunity to learn more about our shared history and a greater appreciation of our common destiny; it has also demonstrated the positive virtues of teamwork in support of a common goal. This is what is needed for Singaporeans to grow and thrive as a cohesive and united nation. "National team-building" is essential for us to adjust, adapt and eventually survive in a dynamic and fast-paced environment.

5. Let me conclude by wishing all of you a fruitful and interesting Quiz session. Thank you.

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