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Singapore Government

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WELCOME ADDRESS BY DR YAACOB IBRAHIM, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF
COMMUNICATIONS, AT THE

LAUNCH OF THE MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY'S MARINET SYSTEM,

16 APRIL 1999, 0930HRS, PSA BUILDING AUDITORIUM.

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1 Let me warmly welcome you to the launch of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore's MARINET system. It is the first Internet-based system of the MPA's to facilitate the shipping community's transactions with the port authority.

2 In an increasingly globalised and interconnected economy, Singapore is very committed to tapping the vast potential that Internet-based services offer. As part of this commitment, Singapore passed an Electronic Transactions Bill in July last year providing a comprehensive legal environment for electronic transactions to be processed safely and securely. We are the first in Southeast Asia to formally define the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved in electronic-commerce.

3 The MPA has, on its part, striven to position Singapore as a centre of international electronic commerce activity. In this regard, the MPA is to be commended for its effective and innovative use of information technology in developing the MARINET system. As one of Singapore's pioneer e-commerce services, it will further develop the Singapore Port as an international hub port.

4 The MARINET system provides convenience and benefits to its users. The system is Windows-based and it is fully Y2K compliant, as it should be without saying! More importantly, the Marinet system heralds the start of a new era of convenience, efficiency and responsiveness for the MPA's clients and customers. Shipping agents will now be able to submit their statutory declarations electronically, 24 hours a day, from anywhere in the world, instead of having to visit the MPA's One-Stop Document Centre for this purpose. Port users will be able to check on the status of their vessel declarations, and receive port clearances electronically upon approval. MARINET also provides value-added, real-time information on vessel arrivals and departures, and up-to-date location of vessels in port. The ordering of pilot and tug services will also be possible using the MARINET system.

5 I am told that there are now 1,500 MARINET accounts from more than 370 companies in the maritime industry. I am sure this figure will steadily increase as the benefits of the system become apparent. The MPA will continue to tap the potential of the MARINET. Plans are already underway to introduce more Internet-based services. For example, the MPA is currently studying the possibility of introducing e-commerce services to the bunker industry to enhance Singapore's status as a top bunkering port in the world. The vision is for shipowners and bunker suppliers to buy and sell bunker fuel electronically. I am confident that the MPA will continue to exploit the use of information technology in innovative ways to better serve the maritime and shipping community.

6 It is estimated that by the year 2002, electronic trade worldwide would be worth US\$400 billion. This means a 30-fold increase in five years or a doubling of the market every year. In closing, I encourage all of you in the industry to actively explore and embrace the use of the Internet as a platform for business transactions. We should ride the e-commerce wave and seize this opportunity to widen our competitive edge, especially during the current economic slowdown. We will then emerge stronger and more competitive when the economy recovers.

Thank you.