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Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR YAACOB IBRAHIM, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

AT THE LONG SERVICE AWARDS AND APPRECIATION CEREMONY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND
CULTURAL ACTIVITY INSTRUCTORS ON TUESDAY, 7TH SEPTEMBER 1999, AT 8.00 PM AT THE
APOLLO HOTEL SINGAPORE, VENUS BALLROOM

Good evening

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to be with you this evening to present the Long Service Awards for the People's Association (PA) Continuing Education and Cultural Activity Instructors.

The PA is proud to have a pool of motivated and dedicated instructors. Activity instructors play a valuable role in contributing to the social fabric of Singapore. You help to enrich the lives of Singaporeans through a wide range of cultural and educational courses conducted at the community centres and clubs. Last year, the PA conducted 16,000 of these courses which attracted over 200,000 participants of different races and from all walks of life.

For Singapore to be a vibrant modern city – one which fulfils not only the citizens' economic and security needs but also their intellectual, aesthetic, recreational and social needs – we need a diversity of talent and people. This diversity will translate into the programmes and activities thereby creating more

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exciting programmes for our people. People, such as all of you, contribute to this diversity. Activity instructors play an integral role in adding that diversity and buzz to the programmes that you conduct. You can contribute through active partnership with the community organizations in developing new and innovative programmes that are responsive and relevant to the people's needs.

Knowledge and information are the key resources of the new economy. With these resources, you can add further value to your product and services. But knowledge and information changes very quickly. Thus, it is important that we retrain and upgrade our skills in order to stay relevant. As instructors, it is important that you be forward-looking and to update and expand your areas of expertise. It is important for you to go beyond your areas of specialization, disciplines or skills. You need to instill a passion for life-long learning in the people you teach. You must also constantly strive to be innovative in your teaching and presentations in order to compete in this new economy.

In this respect, I am glad to note that the PA has organized workshops for the activity instructors. In these workshops, our instructors will be exposed to new and innovative techniques in the teaching of visual arts, dance and vocal courses. The PA and the Singapore Art Museum, for example, are collaborating to introduce to visual arts instructors the developmental approach of teaching art to children. I am also pleased to note that over the next three months, there will be six more performing arts workshops for instructors. Some of these will be conducted by experts from Japan, India and Hong Kong.

It is heartening to note that many of you have also signed up for the community service project "Heart Time!". This is a worthy project. Eight social service centres and homes will benefit from your service in the first phase. Under the first phase, senior citizens from the Ju Eng Home will learn to make simple handicrafts, which they can then sell to help raise funds for their home. Residents of Boys' Town will learn to play the guitar, drum and keyboard. These efforts are examples of some of the things that you can do to make a difference in the lives of others. If you have not already volunteered for the second phase of the project, I would encourage you to do so.

Tonight, we are happy to present Long Service Awards to 144 instructors. Of special mention are the four instructors who have served the PA for more than 30 years and the 140 instructors who have served 10 years or more. On behalf of the PA Board of Management, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all of you for your dedicated service and invaluable contributions. I am confident that we can continue to work closely to develop a broad base of creative and meaningful courses and activities to meet the needs of the people.

On this note, I wish you all an enjoyable evening.