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SPEECH BY ASSOC PROF YAACOB IBRAHIM

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

AT THE LAUNCH OF THE NOVELL-MENDAKI

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

ON MONDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 1999, 9.00 AM

Mr. Sam Ghebrani, Managing Director, ASEAN for Novell Inc.

Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen

1 The new economy is expected to bring with it challenges as well as opportunities. In this new economy, knowledge, skills and intellectual capital will command a higher premium. Information and networking technology will become strategic enablers for the creation, distribution and even consumption of new knowledge-based products and services. The impact on the way we live, learn, and interact is being felt currently across many nations and societies. Singapore is no exception. In fact, Singapore takes the opposite view that as a nation we must prepare for the changes to come. The government is preparing our people by introducing creative programmes in schools, facilitating the growth of technopreneurship, promoting e-commerce and motivating the workforce to adopt

continuous and life-long learning as a creed.

2 In this new economy, skills retraining and retooling will determine whether we survive and succeed. Change will be the only constant, and the way we live, work and learn will be continuously redefined. Knowledge and information become obsolete very fast. The successes of today are the failures of tomorrow.

3 Our ability as a nation and as a community to master and deploy new technology will be a critical success factor in this new economy. As technology itself undergoes a rapid transformation, and knowledge becomes obsolete, we have to keep learning new skills and unlearn old ones.

4 This ability to adjust and adapt to an ever-changing knowledge and technological environment depends upon both internal and external factors. A community depends a lot on its cultural capital to steer its members in this changing environment. At the same time, external factors such as opportunities to adjust must be present to allow some chance of success in making the transition.

5 It is in this context, that I view today's MOU signing between Mendaki and Novell Inc. Mendaki, a community-based organisation, is geared towards helping the community map out its course towards the new economy. But to do so, it needs resources, expertise, and opportunities. Novell Inc. presents the opportunities for our community to plug into this new economy.

6 I am especially happy with this scholarship programme provided by Novell. This is the first time that scholarships are being offered at the certificate level and in a specialised field. It gives a wonderful opportunity for members of the community to master new skills and technologies and receive an accredited and widely accepted professional qualification at the same time.

7 This scholarship is an investment in a resource that is important for the new economy. The successful applicant will not only add further to our ranks of IT professionals but will be at the forefront of new technology. In the final analysis, it is people, who are highly skilled, knowledgeable, talented, and flexible, that will succeed in the new economy. Our community must have its own fair share of such talented individuals. Scholarships such as the one we are witnessing today are a good example of ways of ensuring the presence of such individuals in our community.

8 Hence, on behalf of the Malay/Muslim community and the Board of Directors of Mendaki, I wish to thank Novell for this scholarship programme. This gesture must be seen beyond the monetary value of the scholarship. This scholarship signifies a positive step in preparing the Malay/Muslim for the information age. Novell has shown great insight and thoughtful leadership in developing a program that adds value to the community.

9 Novell is no stranger to the IT community, and is one of the pioneers in networking. It is a perfect example of a company that is constantly reinventing

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itself to maintain its leadership. From its dominance in networking, Novell is today creating a new competitive edge through network directories.

10 While our community can benefit directly from the scholarships that Novell provides, I also believe we have much to learn from Novell's own experiences as we re-invent ourselves for the new economy. We must develop the skill to change and adapt to changes quickly. Scholarships, such as today's, offer an opportunity for our community to develop this skill. I hope more technology companies would come forward and offer similar "people investments" that can help our community to make a smooth transition to the new economy.

11 Finally, I am extremely pleased to join you here today to witness the signing of the Launch of the Novell-MENDAKI Scholarship Program. This program is both appropriate and timely, as we move into the new millennium and into the Knowledge-Based Economy (KBE).

Thank you.

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