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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Assoc Prof Ho Peng Kee, 13 Nov 99, 10.30 am

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY ASSOC PROF HO PENG KEE, MINISTER OF STATE FOR LAW & HOME AFFAIRS, AT THE
19TH ANNUAL SHELL TRAFFIC GAMES (FINAL) CUM LAUNCH OF THE HANDBOOK ON ROAD SAFETY
PARK ON 13 NOVEMBER 1999 AT 10.30AM AT THE ROAD SAFETY PARK

Mr Simon Lam, Chairman, Shell Companies in Singapore

Commissioner of Police Khoo Boon Hui

Principals, teachers and students

Good morning

It is my pleasure to launch the 19th Annual Shell Traffic Games. This is the last traffic games for this century, and indeed the millennium. The Road Safety Park will then be upgraded before it is re-opened next year.

Continue to take road safety for children seriously

2 In the first nine months of this year 146 children who were pedestrians, aged below 12, were road accident casualties. One was killed. The safety of our young road users is a matter all of us – parents, teachers, and other road users – must continue to take seriously.

3 Children are highly vulnerable to road accidents because many of them are not fully aware of the potential dangers and do not know how to avoid road hazards. They are particularly at risk when they use the roads by themselves. Ninety-two of the 146 child casualties I mentioned were unaccompanied by adults when they were hurt.

The role of parents

4 Because it is not possible for young children to be accompanied by adults all the time, parents must teach their children to use roads safely and explain to them the potential dangers and how to avoid them. It is nothing new; dashing across the road without looking out for oncoming vehicles; jaywalking; crossing in front of or between stationary vehicles; disregarding pedestrian crossing signals; and failure to use pedestrian crossings are the main and certainly preventable causes of accidents involving children.

5 Parents must not only teach the proper habits, they must themselves be good examples for their children to follow. Good road safety habits can only be effectively cultivated and maintained when parents lead by example. There is the common saying that it takes three years to learn the good habits, but it takes less than three days to unlearn them and worse still, pick up bad ones.

How motorists can help

6 Motorists can help. They must slow down, exercise greater care, and be on a look out for young road users, especially when driving near schools and playgrounds.

The community's role through Safe Drive Zone projects

7 The community can play a part too. For example, in March this year, several residents in Ang Mo Kio-Cheng San CDC got together and volunteered to be Community Wardens in a Safe Drive Zone project under the Community Safety and Security Programme. These volunteers station themselves outside primary schools during the traffic peak hours in the morning, afternoon and evening. This spirit of community self-help contributes significantly to the safety of the students of the schools. The project has also been implemented in Northeast CDC, and I understand that other CDCs are also considering this beneficial project.

Road safety education in schools

8 Traffic Police will continue to place emphasis on road safety education in schools. Road safety is currently a part of the school curriculum. It is a core topic in the Home Team workbooks entitled 'Safe and Secure. That's Our Singapore'. Traffic Police produced a CD-ROM entitled 'Road to Adventure' targeted at primary school students. Traffic Police also holds regular talks and exhibitions in schools. In addition to the workbooks, talks and CD-ROM, this Road Safety Park is a critical part of road safety education.

9 This park has been specially designed to teach students how to use our roads safely in a way best suited to them. Over the years, more than a million school children have visited this park. They have picked up useful, lifelong skills at being good road users. Some of the adults among us here today may remember visiting this park in its early days.

10 I thank Shell for supporting this park for the past 19 years. Shell has to-date contributed more than \$5 million towards road safety education. This signals Shell's firm commitment to this worthy cause.

Road safety park open on Sundays from next year

11 I am pleased to announce that next year, the public will get to use the Road Safety Park on Sundays. Parents will then be able to bring their children to the park and share tips and experiences on road safety as a family. I thank all the sponsors who are making this possible.

Road Safety Park Handbook

12 Today we will also be launching the Road Safety Park Handbook. This Handbook outlines the history of the park and its vision into the new millennium. It will also contain many road safety tips, making it a useful resource book for road

safety education.

13 I thank the various sponsors for their firm and consistent support of the important task of educating our children in using our roads safely. I also commend the schools and Traffic Police for their efforts in road safety education.

14 By all of us working together - parents, schools, the community, sponsors and Police - we can further reduce the number of young road casualties and make our roads even safer for everyone. Thank you.

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