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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Dr John Chen, 18 Nov 99, 10.30am

Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY DR JOHN CHEN

ACTING MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE LAUNCH OF HORIZONBBAND

HELD AT WESTIN STAMFORD, CANNING ROOM

ON 18 NOV 99 AT 10.30 AM

Lt-Gen Ng Jui Ping,

Group Executive Chairman,

Horizon Technologies International Pte Ltd

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1.   Good morning, I am delighted to be here this morning to witness the company and service launch of HORIZONbBAND.   This event augurs well for Singapore as we aspire to be a content hub for Interactive Broadband Multimedia.

Broadband Multimedia Industry

2.   Traditionally, multimedia content distribution has been hampered by the lack of access bandwidth, which in turn lowers the demand for multimedia creation. However, this situation is changing. Predictions from Jupiter Communications indicated that there will be two million subscribers to high-speed connectivity in the U.S. by end 1999, and this will reach more than 11 million households by 2002.

3.   Major players have also moved rapidly into the broadband multimedia market. There has been active development in the US, both in the proliferation of the broadband infrastructure, as well as the creation and distribution of media-rich content. For example, AOL, the world's largest Internet service provider, has also announced plans to develop broadband content. It is investing in digital subscriber lines (DSL) and satellites, to reach out to millions of potential high-speed Internet customers. Software giant Microsoft has also invested heavily in major US and European cable companies, in a move to boost its position in broadband multimedia services.

4.   Ultimately, the proliferation of broadband connectivity and media convergence will bring about increased user demand for multimedia content. This is enhanced by its multi-modal delivery channels, including cable, xDSL, satellite or fibre to homes. Hence, I believe that the potential of the broadband multimedia industry will be tremendous and exciting.

Broadband in Singapore

5.   In Singapore, we are well positioned to ride with the broadband industry's growth. The roll-out of Singapore ONE - the world's first nation-wide broadband infrastructure for multimedia applications and services - is on track. Today, 98% of all homes in Singapore have connections to Singapore ONE. Singapore ONE is available in all schools, five tertiary institutions, about half of the public libraries, as well as, many community centres throughout Singapore. There are also some 200 public kiosks which are connected to Singapore ONE. With 34,000 access nodes and 80,000 local users, Singapore ONE will continue to deliver the benefits of broadband multimedia to everyone.

6.   The number of new SingaporeONE applications and services has also built up steadily. Today, more than 200 multinationals and local companies are already

actively using Singapore ONE to deliver over 180 interactive, multimedia applications and services. These cover many wide-ranging interests, from leisure and entertainment to health information, government and business services, shopping, banking and education.

7.   With its near island-wide reach and fast-growing number of users, Singapore ONE is an ideal test-bed for multimedia applications development. We encourage local and international companies to make use of the Singapore ONE infrastructure to experiment and create innovative broadband services and products.

Singapore - A Content Hub for Interactive Broadband Multimedia

8.   Singapore ONE's pervasive network also positions Singapore as an excellent content hub for interactive broadband multimedia. The content value chain consists of content development, content packaging, distribution and value-added services before reaching the users. Singapore can focus on niche areas in the value-chain, such as re-packaging and aggregating content and value-adding services.

9.   The government has committed resources to build Singapore's broadband connectivity and capacity to Asia and major cities around the world. Singapore will also ensure that our own National Information Infrastructure (NII) is of world class standard when it is linked to Asia Pacific Information Infrastructure (APII) and Global Information Infrastructure (GII).

10.   However, a lot more still needs to be done to achieve our goal of becoming an interactive broadband multimedia content hub. Although there is a sizable pool of broadband expertise created by the local and foreign Singapore ONE industry partners, skill-sets in some parts of the multimedia content delivery value chain has to be developed. For example, we are looking at ways to build manpower and industry involvement in service management skills to re-package, aggregate and re-purpose multimedia content.

Creating the Interactive Broadband Multimedia Buzz

11.   In terms of our social environment, the government is also looking into ways to create the kind of buzz and vibrancy that will encourage interactive broadband multimedia activities to take off in Singapore. IDA Singapore, the new statutory board resulting from the merger of NCB and TAS, is organising the first eFestival Asia from 1 - 7 March 2000. Slated to be the "Mardi Gras" of interactive multimedia and on-line technologies, eFestival Asia will offer a totally engaging experience to educate and entertain visitors. The festival will be a good platform for the industry and institutions to showcase their creativity and innovations that impact everyday life in the digital future: at home, at school, at work and at play.

12.   Another good example is ONE Challenge, a nation-wide competition that was recently launched by NCB to attract local and foreign talents into the Broadband arena. The open competition platform is designed to encourage and surface

innovative Broadband application ideas and ultimately spin off successful local Broadband start-ups. The winners of this competition will be announced during eFestival Asia.

Use of Interactive Broadband Multimedia in Education

13.   The education sector is an important area where the potential of Interactive Broadband Multimedia can be further harnessed. On-line interactive multimedia resource can enhance the individual learning experience and encourage creative teaching methods. This includes delivery of on-line lessons using video streaming and CD-ROM content. Students and teachers can have quick and convenient access to rich and highly interactive educational and informational content using the Singapore ONE broadband network.

HORIZONbBAND Portal

14.   HORIZONbBAND is positioned as Singapore's first Broadband Interactive Media Network Operator and intends to deliver huge resources of multimedia content online. They will offer an innovative service that aggregates and re-packages existing CD-ROM and video content for broadband delivery. Developing and bringing such rich content to fill the broadband infrastructure is a vital and crucial role.

15.   A large part of HORIZONbBAND's contribution will be education-related. For a start, they will deliver over 200 edutainment titles for children, which will bring fully interactive education programmes into the home. I am also told that HORIZONbBAND will soon extend into adult training. This will allow agencies that seek to retrain the workforce, for example, to have on-line services with which to extend training programs into homes. This will benefit employees who can re-learn without having to give up employment, as well as employers who can retrain workers without having to lose workers' productivity. Both solutions mean lower costs and greater effectiveness in retraining and advancing our workforce into a knowledge-based economy. Besides this, HORIZONbBAND will also launch entertainment channels such as electronic games and sports, and business channels such as financials and commerce.

16.   HORIZONbBAND's efforts support the national initiatives in encouraging on-line learning and the development of a knowledge-based economy. HORIZONbBAND is using Singapore ONE as the test-bed for its innovative broadband multimedia services, before reaching out to the regional and global markets.

17.   I would like to congratulate HorizonbBand on their entrepreneurial and innovative spirit for taking on the challenge. It is our hope that HORIZONbBAND will spur more innovative companies to exploit the power of Singapore ONE and to transform their strengths from the "brick-and-mortar" world into the "point-and-click" world.

18.   Together, we would make Singapore the place for the development of

media-rich, online applications and services, and establish Singapore as a hub for interactive broadband multimedia content.

Thank You.