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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by A/P Ho Peng Kee, 19 Feb 2000, 11.30am

# *Singapore Government*

# ***PRESS RELEASE***

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**SPEECH BY ASSOC PROF HO PENG KEE, MINISTER OF  
STATE FOR LAW AND HOME AFFAIRS AT THE LAUNCH  
OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN SINGAPORE HISTORY  
MUSEUM & CHONGFU PRIMARY SCHOOL ON  
19 FEBRUARY 2000 AT 11.30 AM AT THE  
SINGAPORE HISTORY MUSEUM**

National Archives of Singapore

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Children of today have access to many channels of learning and resources. Today, education is no longer confined to the school compound as in the past. For example, students access the internet to search for information on their school projects and leisure activities.

2 Today's event marks yet another valuable out-of-the classroom learning experience for our students. This collaboration between the Singapore History Museum and Chongfu Primary School charts a new course to widen young Singaporeans' mental and emotional horizons. It is a meaningful collaboration which other schools can also consider. It adds to the present options for schools to adopt Neighbourhood Parks and Welfare Homes.

3 History museums exist in nearly every country in the world. The main function or responsibility of history museums is to document, present and communicate the nation's history to people. Experts put in much effort, and apply their training diligently, to package the exhibits in a lively, sometimes interactive, but always meaningful manner to tell important stories of a nation's past – its trials, tribulations, successes. In essence, how the nation came about. The Singapore History Museum fulfils this mission too. Indeed, Singapore History Museum has a wealth of resources and information for students to use, learn and experience.

4 It is not easy for younger Singaporeans to appreciate the importance and significance of history. To many of them, history is boring and of little use. This is far from true. It is in understanding history, for example, how key events were important turning points in a country's development, that we can learn precious lessons and avoid pitfalls. History is really about people, people and people – how people shaped events. Studying people can never be boring. The

enduring message must be that we, the present generation, whatever work we do, can also shape events for mankind's betterment.

5 One way to stimulate interest in history is to tell it in an interesting way. No doubt, the message is always important. But the medium or channels by which we put across our message matters too. For example, where appropriate we can use an entertainment approach to educate our students. This collaboration is an attempt to do just that.

6 Chongfu Primary School has always emphasised the importance of nurturing the talents and character of its students in an all-rounded manner. In this case, their focus on the use of IT fits in well with this collaboration.

7 I am pleased to note that the areas of collaboration cover the application of Information Technology, National Education and Community Involvement Programme.

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8 In the application of IT, learning kiosks incorporating the IT skills of students would be set up at the museum. Students would also use the museum exhibits as resource materials for their Social Studies projects based on National Education themes. During ethnic festival celebrations at the museum, Chongfu's wide-ranging and talented core curricular groups would be tapped to put up performances and activities for the visitors. The museum grounds would also be maintained by the primary school students, who may

even add creative colours to the garden and plants.

9 Well, these are some of the activities that are likely to materialise. It is not an exhaustive list. Applying imagination and creativity, I am sure that the museum and school would discover more areas to work together as they complement each other's objectives of educating and entertaining our children in a win-win situation.

10 I am happy to be part of this meaningful and significant event today. I now launch this collaboration between Singapore History Museum and Chongfu Primary School.

Thank you.

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