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Subject: [Embargoed] Speech by Mr Othman Haron Eusope, 9 Mar 00, 9 am

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR OTHMAN HARON EUSOFE
MINISTER OF STATE(MANPOWER)
AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE OSH CD-ROM AND
SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC OSH CENTRE
ON THURSDAY 9 MAR 2000 AT 9AM
AT THE SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC LT 1 A

Good Morning
Principal, Singapore Polytechnic,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen

1. I am happy to be here this morning to join you in this key initiative to promote Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in the Singapore Polytechnic. The establishment of the Singapore Polytechnic's OSH Centre and the launch of the OSH CD-ROM are indeed, timely and will contribute to our mission to position Singapore as a Centre of Excellence on OSH.

2. All of you here would know about Manpower 21, the Blueprint to develop our manpower resources, which was launched about 6 months ago by my Ministry. One of the strategic goals of the Manpower 21 is to achieve World Class Occupational Safety and Health Standards. We are now working closely with employers, unions, educational institutions and other relevant

organisations to attain this key goal of world class Excellence in OSH.

3. We are now moving towards a knowledge-based economy. To promote sustainable economic growth and enhance our competitive edge we have to provide our workforce with ample opportunities to constantly update their skills and knowledge. They must always be relevant to the requirements of an increasingly competitive knowledge based economy. Additionally they have to be strongly motivated to give their best at all times and particularly the desire as well as the capability to come out with new and creative ways to do their work better. A safe and healthy workplace will provide a congenial environment for our workers to perform their best. Our workers must be trained in good safety and health practices so that they will understand the measures that are required and are in place to address safety and health issues. I would like to reiterate that our workers can be motivated to perform their best when they are assured that their health and safety are effectively safeguarded.

4. As to measures to promote and instill more awareness of OSH issues, I am happy to see the SCDF, Singapore Polytechnic and the Ministry of Manpower are collaborating closely on the production of the OSH CD-ROM. I understand that the OSH CD-Rom contains three modules covering Occupational Safety, Occupational Health and Legislation on Safety and Health. These interactive instructional modules have been designed to allow students of the Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) to master the above topics at their own pace. Further the exercises and assessments are structured to make learning relevant, realistic and fun. I would like to urge all the other Polytechnics and the Universities to explore creative ways to include these modules into their curriculum and make them readily available to the students. These modules, I am sure, will better prepare them to promote safety and health when they join the workplace on graduation. It is also useful for the materials in the CD-ROMs to be made readily available to managers, supervisors as well as workers so that they can also gain some valuable insights on ways to promote safety and health awareness in their organisations.

5. I am glad to note that Singapore Polytechnic has integrated OSH topics into their diploma courses. I commend the Singapore Polytechnic for their strong commitment to OSH. I am aware that this means a challenge to incorporate OSH topics into the already demanding curriculum. However, this is a worthwhile enterprise as students who graduate would have been properly assessed on OSH skills and knowledge and can apply them when they start work. It will be an important contribution to create a healthy and safe work environment. I would like to encourage other IHLs to emulate the Singapore Polytechnic's initiative. I am told also that the Singapore Polytechnic will be installing these OSH Modules into a virtual college so that the modules can be readily accessed through the web. Further the OSH Centre currently conducts the Advanced Diploma in Safety Management Course and other safety courses. This Polytechnic OSH Centre will therefore enable the Singapore Polytechnic to play a pivotal role in providing OSH training in Singapore. It will provide OSH personnel another facility to upgrade their professionalism and this will contribute to strengthen our OSH industry.

6. Let me now end by commending the Singapore Polytechnic OSH Centre on its important contribution to the goal of promoting Singapore as a Centre of Excellence for OSH. It gives me

great pleasure to launch the OSH CD-Rom and to declare open the Singapore Polytechnic OSH Centre.

7. Thank you.

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