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cc: (bcc: Jeannie LEE/MTI/SINGOV)
Subject: (EMGARGOED) Speech by Mr Eddie Teo, 27 Mar 2000, 7.45pm

Singapore Government PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR EDDIE TEO, PERMANENT SECRETARY (PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE) AT THE TWELFTH ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE DINNER ON 27 MAR 2000, 7.45 PM AT THE TOWER BALLROOM, SHANGRI-LA HOTEL

Deputy Prime Minister Dr Tony Tan, Chairman PSC, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Welcome to the twelfth Administrative Service Dinner and Promotion Ceremony. We are very privileged to have Dr Tony Tan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, as our Guest-of-Honour this evening. This annual event marks the significant career milestones and achievements of Administrative Officers. It is also a time for reflection on our role as members

of the Administrative Service.

2 On behalf of Head, Civil Service who is currently overseas, I would like to provide a brief update on the state of the Administrative Service and some of the key developments in the past year. There are currently 275 officers in the Service. This includes 42 Dual Career Officers appointed from within the public service, and three mid-career officers recruited from the private sector. In 1999, a total of 14 persons were appointed as Administrative Officers or Dual Career Officers. A record number of nine Dual Career Officers were also absorbed into the Administrative Service.

3 As members of the Administrative Service, we have a vital leadership role in ensuring the security, survival and success of Singapore at all times. It is our duty to continue to provide the highest standard of public service to Singaporeans. This is a challenging task given the rapid changes and increasing complexities in our operating environment, as well as the rising expectations of our population. To continue to discharge its responsibilities effectively, the Administrative Service will need to enlarge its talent pool to include officers with a variety of background, knowledge and experience. This will ensure that the public sector constantly has the skills and expertise to deal with all issues that affect Singaporeans. For this reason, in addition to recruiting young graduates, we are always on the look out for private sector candidates to join us in the Administrative Service as mid-career officers. Although only a few have so far taken up the challenge, we will continue to try to recruit more of them so that the Service can benefit from their experiences in the private sector. Those of you with innovative ideas about how we can inject the Service with a broad range of perspectives and expertise should either get in touch with PSD or submit them for the "Enterprise Challenge".

4 With the business of government becoming more complex, the demands on Administrative Officers will continue to increase. Just as the Service as a whole needs to imbibe a wider variety of talents, individual Administrative Officers would also need to broaden their exposure and acquire more competencies. It is no longer sufficient for Administrative Officers to serve as effective staff officers. To do his job well, the Administrative Officer must be good in both policy and operational work. He needs to understand the strategic constraints and imperatives we face as a nation. He must also be aware of what is happening in the global economy, even if they are not related directly to his area of work. He needs to understand what is going on in the private and people sectors and communicate more effectively with both. More consultation will result in better policies which can be more smoothly implemented. As the

civil service adjusts to these changing needs, not only will we need to review the way we do things, but we must also review our core values to see if they need to be adapted to the changing times. Certainly, several IM rules will have to be redrafted if some of the new initiatives we have in mind, such as the "Enterprise Challenge", can work. Some of these issues touch upon the very ethos of the Public Service and the Public Sector leadership must take a hard look and come up with sound and realistic answers.

5 The Service has put in place various programmes for Administrative Officers to be exposed to the private and people sectors. Since 1997, we have been sending Administrative Officers to head Community Development Councils. This year, apart from the two Administrative Officers who are already working in the CDCs, we will be sending two more officers to head another 2 CDCs. With the CDCs taking on the expanded role of local government, these officers will stand to gain by developing a better feel for the people sector and improving their managerial skills through running an operational outfit.

6 Apart from regular postings, milestone training programmes such as the Foundation Course are designed to maximise the exposure of the participants through attachments to Voluntary Welfare Organisations and operational departments, and through study visits to other countries. Ten officers participated in the 1999 Community Attachment Programme, which lasted four months - outside their office hours, of course. As part of the programme, the officers were required to work with grassroots leaders in Singapore to complete at least one community project. We also attached one officer to the US Congress as part of the plan to broaden the international exposure of Administrative Officers. A group of 15 Administrative Officers participated in a study trip to Silicon Valley last month. The objective of the trip is to provide AOs with the opportunity to gain greater insights in the areas of innovation and entrepreneurship. We hope to continue this programme but some of us have a slight worry that if the lessons are really effective, we will lose some AOs in the process.

7. To better understand your aspirations and requirements, we will need your feedback. Not all your desires will be fulfilled, but we promise to give you at least a good hearing. We should capitalise on the small size and closeness of the Service to institute a better system of communication and feedback. Starting from this year, we have asked AOs to suggest topics that they would like to look into for our AO Project Teams to study. This approach will lead to greater ownership of the projects when they are eventually

launched. Similarly, we will also be using e-mail surveys to collect the views of AOs on issues relating to the Administrative Service. This will help to ensure that PSD can have a better sense of possible pitfalls and blindspots when formulating our policies. However, such an approach will only work if AOs can see that their feedback is taken seriously and that their views will not be held against them. I assure you that your feedback will be treated in strict confidence. It is meant to help us gauge how people feel about the system and its policies and how they wish to improve them. So, please give us your honest opinions and views. We value them and we will take them seriously.

8. This year, 46 officers will be promoted with effect from 1st April 2000 - 14 officers within the Timescale grades, five to become Superscale Officers, and 27 within the Superscale grades. In addition, nine more young officers could be promoted in the course of the year.

9. I congratulate all who are being promoted and wish you the best as you take on new challenges and more demanding responsibilities.

10. May I now invite DPM Dr Tony Tan to address the audience and present letters of promotion and Certificates of Appointment to the Significant Grade and above.

Thank you

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For clarifications, please contact Mr James Wong (Tel: 3327639) or Ms Joyce Chia (Tel:3327198)