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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Mr Peter Chen, 29 Mar 2000, 10 am

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR PETER CHEN,
SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION
AT THE PRESENTATION CUM EXHIBITION OF
POLYTECHNIC FINAL YEAR STUDENTS' PROJECTS –
A COLLABORATION BETWEEN LTA AND THE
POLYTECHNICS ON WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH 2000
AT 10.00 AM AT THE OCTAGON,
NGEE ANN POLYTECHNIC**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen,

Introduction

1 I am delighted to be able to witness again the fruits of another year of successful collaboration between the Land Transport Authority (LTA) and the Polytechnics.

2 I was extremely impressed by the quality of the projects presented last year and am glad that the LTA has continued to offer industry projects to provide more opportunities for our polytechnic students to solve real-life practical problems.

Final Year Students Projects

3 Project work is a critical part of the polytechnic curriculum. It brings out creativity in students, promotes problem-based learning and helps our institutions to train innovative and practice oriented graduates who will help Singapore to maintain its competitive edge. Students are therefore encouraged to participate in projects in collaboration with industry as they offer invaluable learning opportunities that cannot be obtained through course work alone.

4 Many students have benefited from the Polytechnics' collaboration with LTA. The knowledge and skills that they have acquired in the course of working on the projects, including exposure to real life issues and demands at the workplace, will give them a headstart as they prepare to join the workforce.

5 Our Polytechnics are already well recognised internationally. We can all take pride in knowing that our Polytechnics academic programmes carry with them valuable practical experience that only an academic-industry collaboration can provide. The completed projects will also help LTA build up a valuable reservoir of data and ideas specific to its work from which it can draw upon in future.

Results of LTA-Polytechnic Collaboration

6 Last year, 98 students worked on 25 projects. I am informed that the number of projects has increased by 10 this year. This has allowed more students to participate. Altogether, 125 students took part in 35 projects. This is the best testimony for the value of the collaboration to both parties.

7 I understand that this year's projects are even more challenging.

From previous experience, both the LTA and the polytechnics felt that students should be capable of coping with a higher level of technical complexity. As a result, students faced greater challenges in finding practical solutions and developing new products. For example, students will be involved in developing an automatic re-settable electronic starter for fluorescent fittings; implementing an intelligent way to structure traffic information for easy retrieval via the Internet; and designing a device that can replace high-level lighting bulbs without the use of scaffolding.

8 In addition, some of the results of previous year's projects were so encouraging that further developmental work will be undertaken to refine the solutions. As an example, projects that are extensions of the previous academic year's projects involve the study of waterproofing systems used by the LTA for underground structures and the numerical simulation of the excavation of an MRT station.

Prizes for Top Projects

9 This year, as an encouragement to the students, prizes will be given to the top projects from each Polytechnic. But more importantly, all participants will take home with them the invaluable experience gained from their involvement in these projects. Perhaps the day will come when having participated in an LTA/Polytechnic Collaboration Project will itself be a badge of honour for a Polytechnic graduate.

Concluding Remarks

10 In closing, I wish both the LTA and the Polytechnics continued success in future collaborations.

11 Thank you.