

To:
cc: (bcc: NHB NASReg/NHB/SINGOV)
Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Mr Othman Haron Eusofe, 27 Jun 2000, 9.30am

Singapore Government

MEDIA RELEASE

Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 140 Hill Street #02-02 MITA Building
Singapore 179369. Tel: 837 9666

EMBARGO INSTRUCTIONS

The attached press release/speech is **EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY**.
Please check against delivery.
For assistance call 837 9666

SPRInter 4.0, Singapore's Press Releases on the Internet, is located at:
<http://www.gov.sg/sprinter/>

To be embargoed until delivery
Please check against delivery

**SPEECH BY MR OTHMAN HARON EUSOFE MINISTER OF STATE FOR
MANPOWER AT THE MENDAKI-NANYANG POLYTECHNIC JOINT PROJECT FOR
MALAY-MUSLIM STUDENTS OFFICIAL LAUNCHING CEREMONY ON TUESDAY,
27 JUN 2000, 9.30AM AT NANYANG POLYTECHNIC AUDITORIUM**

Assoc Prof Yaacob Ibrahim
Dy Chairman, Board of Directors, Yayasan Mendaki
Mr Lim Cheng Toh, Principal Nanyang Polytechnic

Distinguished Guests, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning and Assalamualaikum wr wb

1. Let me first congratulate the new students of Nanyang Polytechnic. I am told that there are about 479 Malay/Muslim students or 13.3% of the Intake 2000 with more than half of them in the School of Engineering. A Polytechnic education will provide you with a strong foundation to pursue various opportunities in further education to benefit your future working life. I would like to strongly urge all of you to vigorously endeavour to pursue excellence in your studies. As you learn to acquire knowledge, it would also be beneficial for you to adopt an inquiring and critical approach to the subjects you are

being taught. This would require you to work hard to get a strong understanding and grasp of the fundamental areas of your study. At the same time be prepared to broaden your interest in other areas of knowledge beyond your courses of study.

2. At the Malay/Muslim KBE Convention organised last year one of the strategic thrust of the Convention's recommendations is to develop and maximise the talent in the Community. This means creating opportunities for everyone in the community to develop his or her potential to the fullest. This Nanyang Polytechnic/Mendaki Joint Project is one of the ways to operationalize the Convention's recommendation. I understand that this partnership programme will adopt a three tiered approach. At the general level, all students will be given the opportunity to understand better the demands of polytechnic education. For example today's programme will include a discussion and sharing session with a Nanyang Polytechnic Muslim staff member as well as a motivational talk by a private service provider. There is also the proposal to develop a buddy system and a hotline for students to use to inquire about courses and other related areas of the polytechnic education. Occasional talks and seminars, and holiday camps will also be organised under this programme open to all students. Support services will also be provided for students who encounter difficulties while undertaking their Polytechnic studies.

3. Another feature of this general programme is a preparatory course for new polytechnic students. Mendaki is planning to conduct tuition in Additional Mathematics for incoming students starting in 2001. Feedback from the Polytechnics has shown that Malay/Muslim students who do not have a good background in Additional Mathematics face difficulties in some of their courses. This is an area to which will have to be quickly addressed. This programme therefore aims to help all Malay/Muslim students to achieve better performance in their polytechnic education.

4. The second level seeks to develop the projects to benefit students who have a natural flair and interest in certain key or growth areas. For example students studying in areas such as information technology and biotechnology and those interested in technopreneurship, will be offered special programmes to enhance their interest and knowledge in these subjects. The thrust of the special programmes is two-fold; to help students gain better insights into their areas of interest, and to provide opportunities for them to develop their interest further.

5. The third level will consist of an incentive scheme for students who achieve exemplary performance in their studies. The scheme aims to help them to pursue further education once they have successfully completed their diploma programmes. It will come in the form of scholarships to be used for university education. Every year students who have done well will be given monetary benefits which they can use if they continue with their education at the university.

6. I would like to congratulate Mendaki for starting this initiative to help Malay/Muslim students in the Nanyang Polytechnic to develop to their maximum potential. My thanks also to the Principal and staff of Nanyang Polytechnic for joining Mendaki in this partnership programme and for their valuable contribution. Mendaki can also work with other educational institutions to develop similar partnership projects. We have to endeavour to find new and creative ways to help our young to develop to their fullest potential.

7. We live in a very competitive world brought about by the twin forces of globalization and technological development. This development will create more opportunities but it is crucial that we keep ahead of the competition. Singapore has to transform itself quickly into a knowledge-based economy to stay ahead. This is the New Economy where talent, skills, creativity and new ideas will make the key difference. Not only will the pace of change be fast but there will also be uncertainties ahead. It will have an impact on you. You will soon realize that whatever you have learned and acquired can get outdated or obsolete very fast. What is critical is your ability to cope with the unexpected. Hence besides coping with the subjects of your courses, how you respond to the training that is provided is important. You must develop strong determination and a mindset of continuous challenge and learning.

8. In the New Economy you will not be entering a local or even regional employment market rather it will be a global market where the competition for talent will be fierce. You would have to regularly upgrade your skills and knowledge and also be multi-skilled to remain relevant and employable. During the course of your Polytechnic education, you will have to do industrial or work attachments. Strive hard to go for international attachments to the best companies in the world. In the process it will broaden your mind to think globally as well as to develop a network of economic and social contacts. There are some of the key challenges that will confront you in the future. Bear them in mind as you work hard to excel in your study. This is just the start of a long journey to acquire knowledge and more knowledge. While you cannot afford to be complacent, do not be afraid to make mistakes but learn from the mistakes. To be competitive, you would have to venture into new areas, develop ideas and create value. As you explore you may sometime stumble but be ready and determined to stand up and to move ahead. This fighting spirit coupled with the stamina for life-long learning will ensure your continued success in the exciting future ahead. On this note, I wish all of you every success in your studies.
