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**SPEECH BY DR NG ENG HEN, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE, AT THE NTUC INFOCOMM & MEDIA
CLUSTER NATIONAL DAY OBSERVANCE CEREMONY ON FRIDAY, 7
AUGUST 2009 AT 3PM, AT THE TIMES CENTRE**

Mr Ang Wah Lai, Chairman, NTUC Infocomm & Media Cluster

Mrs Josephine Teo, Assistant Secretary-General, NTUC

Mr Ho Tian Yee, Chairman, Times Publishing Ltd

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. It gives me great pleasure to join you today where unions and employers jointly participate at the National Day Observance Ceremony organised by the NTUC Infocomm & Media Cluster.

Importance of the Infocomm & Media Industry

2. The Infocomm & Media Industry is a fast growing sector and despite the downturn, showed continued growth in 2008, albeit at a slower rate compared to the past few years. But this sector is also a fast changing one, driven by technological innovations in a highly competitive market. This presents challenges to both companies and individual workers who cannot keep up, but also opportunities for those who can stay relevant.

3. The work you do and your products are essential for the day to day functioning of business and benefits society at large. For education, I note that

Marshall Cavendish has published textbooks adopting the Singapore Maths method and distributed it to over 30 countries.

4. The use of IT is pervasive in our schools and students are highly IT savvy – they are the so called “net natives” who are extensive users of your products. I am told that Times Publishing Ltd has developed products for e-learning and is working with some schools to deliver school curriculum digitally in an engaging and interactive manner. This includes mobile learning programmes that can be used for school excursions and outdoor activities using the iPhone platform, to make learning fun and experiential.

5. Indeed, students today are able to multi-task on the computer and adapt to new programmes and gadgets with minimal effort, almost intuitively. We have exploited such IT innovations to help our schools teach better. For example, in this H1N1 outbreak, students on leave of absence could keep up with e-learning from home.

Role of the Infocomm & Media Cluster

6. But I am also aware of the pressure on the Infocomm and Media sector. Each time MOE reviews our IT masterplan, about once every 5 years, the landscape would have been radically different and many vendors compete to offer better facilities and customisation. I am therefore glad to note that your cluster holds regular meetings and forums to not only share industrial relations practices, but also update each other on developments in the industry. A strong labour-management relationship is essential if you are to

tackle the challenges in a concerted manner and to grow the Infocomm & Media pie in Singapore. The next lap for the cluster will require strong, united and visionary leadership and watchful implementation. I urge all of you to play a decisive part in propelling the cluster to greater heights.

Conclusion

7. In closing, let me commend the Infocomm & Media Cluster, as well as Times Publishing Ltd, for organising the National Day Observance Ceremony.

8. I wish you all a Happy National Day. Thank you

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