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SPEECH BY MS GRACE FU, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, AT MOE EXCEL FEST 2010 AT SUNTEC CONVENTION CENTRE, ON FRIDAY, 5TH MARCH 2010

Good morning, colleagues

1. It is with pleasure that I join you here at the MOE ExCEL Fest 2010 to celebrate our schools' and teachers' success in Innovation and Enterprise.

2. MOE ExCEL Fest first began in 1997 as a Work Improvement Teams (WITs) Day to recognise and celebrate innovation within the workplace. The event has since grown in scale and outreach. Today, ExCEL Fest and the vast sharing opportunities that it provides are extended to all schools and, more significantly, to parents and members of the public. This growth aptly reflects the importance placed on Innovation & Enterprise (I&E), a key focus of the education service, as we strive to nurture our students to be innovative and ready for the world.

3. In fact, this task has taken on a more critical and urgent tone. Recently, the Economic Strategies Committee (ESC) released its report. In it, the committee painted a vision of Singapore as a distinctive global city – open and diverse, the best place to grow and reach out to a rising Asia. The committee recommended that we make skills, innovation and productivity the basis for economic growth. I think as educators in MOE, we play a very significant role in helping Singapore to realise this vision by preparing our students for it.

4. This year's ExCEL Fest theme, '**Every Child Ready for the World**' therefore aptly captures this challenge for us. In fact, our recent preoccupation has been with

equipping our students with a creative mindset and skills which are required for the future. This has been the driver for many recent initiatives such as IT Masterplan 3, Teach Less Learn More and the Curriculum 2015 project.

5. Under this year's broad theme of 'Every Child Ready for the World', we have identified 4 areas of focus that showcase our recent efforts to prepare our students for the future. These are:

I. This is IT!

II. Learning out of the box

III. On your mark, get ready... Go global; and

IV. Character Plus

Each of these areas is exemplified by the school exhibitors and Classroom Experience presenters who have worked very hard to showcase their innovations at this year's event.

6. The first sub-theme, '**This is IT!**' emphasises the use of Infocomm Technology in transforming the learning experiences of our students. Under MOE's IT Masterplan 3, we want to leverage on IT to help our student develop competencies for self-directed and collaborative learning as well as to become discerning and responsible ICT users.

7. Schools are therefore constantly in search of new technologies and more ingenious ways in which to teach and engage our students. Teachers from schools like **Yusof Ishak Secondary School** are exploring game platforms which are already popular among our youth. These teachers develop innovative lesson packages that integrate games into lessons in a way that increases the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The school has successfully integrated the use of the Nintendo Wii in the teaching of Biology, specifically the knowledge of the human body, by playing the game, "Trauma Centre". Students role-play as trainee surgeons and conduct research into the functions of different organs. Teams of students later perform virtual surgery and thus gain an interactive and realistic insight into the workings of the

human body. These lessons were so successful with the students that the use of the Wii was extended to pilot lessons in subjects such as Food and Nutrition, Geography, History and Music. Yusof Ishak Secondary will be implementing the use of the Wii as part of their regular curriculum this year.

8. In the second sub-theme, '**Learning out of the box**', Science and Design & Technology teachers of **Woodgrove Secondary School** developed a project that allowed students to apply conceptual knowledge to a real-life problem. When faced with the possibility of changing the electrically-powered school fountain into a solar-powered one, teachers exploited the opportunity by creating an authentic learning experience for a group of Secondary 3 and 4 students. Students were tasked to design and assemble a solar-powered module. They partnered with lecturers from Temasek Polytechnic and project managers from the industries. The project resulted in long-term energy savings for the school and the students also assisted teachers in the development of a lesson plan on the use of solar power. This will be implemented in lower secondary classes this year to raise awareness about the need for alternative energy sources.

9. Next, the theme '**On your mark, get ready... Go global**' emphasises the need to give students the opportunity to gain a wide range of experiences that transcend geographical boundaries. Schools are encouraged to embark on international partnerships and twinning projects.

10. An example of an internationalisation programme is one put up by **Raffles Girls' School**. The school's twinning programme with Tunku Kurshiah College, a girls' college in Malaysia, integrates activities such as joint research and student dialogues. Going beyond the usual cultural exchanges, the school seeks to create regular opportunities for networking to help the students develop cross-cultural competencies. Many regular inter-school activities were organised. These included RGS' participation in TKC's Science Carnival and Innovation & Engineering Showcase and Merdeka Day, whilst students from TKC have also participated in

RGS's International Convention for Youth Leaders and the school's 130th Anniversary Celebrations.

11. Finally, beyond mere academic success, we aim to nurture students who are confident and are of sound character and values. The '**Character Plus**' sub-theme aims to showcase schools' efforts in equipping students with core values and social emotional competencies. Beyond formal lessons, schools like **Compassvale Primary School** seek to find learning opportunities outside the classroom. The Enhance Social Emotional Learning (ESEL) @ Home package is a resource pack that serves to support parents in the reinforcement of their children's social emotional learning at home. Identifying the potential of their own unique "Record, Replay to Learn" system, the teachers at Compassvale Primary utilised these media capabilities in non-intrusive recording of classroom lessons. The recording was given to parents in the ESEL @ Home CD package.

12. These are just some of the many examples of innovations that are transforming the learning environment in our schools. The Excel Fest is the platform to allow teachers and educators to share and learn from each other and to sustain the culture of excellence and innovation.

13. In order to give recognition to teachers and staff who have developed innovative ideas, we will be giving out 56 Innergy awards today. Of which, we have 4 Golds, 8 Silvers and 14 Bronzes. Another 28 individuals will receive Best Suggestion Awards for their innovative ideas to create value or to overcome problems faced in their schools or workplace.

14. ExCEL, or '**Excellence through Continuous Enterprise and Learning**', sums up the government's vision to develop the capacity of public officers through innovation, continuous learning and improvement. The creativity and dedication of the awardees today certainly exemplify the spirit of nurturing innovation and enterprise in schools.

15. Finally, 2010 marks the year of the first ever Summer Youth Olympic Games. MOE has developed an Olympic Education Programme that highlights the Olympic Movement and the Olympic values of Excellence, Friendship and Respect. Under our Friends@YOG programme, we hope to equip our students with skills to interact with individuals of different cultures. The Village Olympia exhibition area will showcase the YOG Movement and how students will be benefiting from Singapore's successful bid to host the YOG.

16. In closing, may I offer my heartiest congratulations to today's Innergy Award and Best Suggestion Award recipients. I hope that you will all have an enjoyable day at MOE ExCEL Fest 2010.

17. Thank you.

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