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SPEECH BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
AND CHAIRMAN, MENDAKI BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AT THE
LAUNCHING OF MENDAKI MEETS 1991 TOP 10% PSLE PUPILS,
PARENTS AND MENTORS SESSION ON SATURDAY, 18 JANUARY 1992
AT TEMASEK JUNIOR COLLEGE LECTURE THEATRE 1 AT 2.30 PM

I want to begin my remarks this afternoon with congratulations to everybody -- to the students for passing last year's PSLE with distinction; to their parents for their part in helping their children achieve such fine results, and enrolling their sons and daughters in MENDAKI'S Enrichment programme and to the dedicated professional men and women who have volunteered to be mentors and role models to the students.

Together you represent a commitment to the pursuit of excellence that will be of lasting benefit to the Malay/Muslim community, and ultimately to Singapore.

This is more than a ceremony to acknowledge good performances at school. It is also a way of underscoring the importance of TOTAL DEVELOPMENT -- education in its fullest sense.

Clever school children do not develop into useful or even happy adults without those other skills that enable them to cope with the realities of later life.

It is these maturing skills that the Enrichment Programme seeks to impart to our young people -- to foster and enhance their individual strengths, to impart leadership qualities, and

to teach sound moral values and a sense of responsibility. It seeks to provide the complete diet for a healthy mind and personality.

In many ways, it parallels MENDAKI's own attitudes to the wider Malay/Muslim community.

MENDAKI has concentrated on the educational development of Muslim children since its inception in 1981, a policy aimed at the very foundations of social progress.

But latterly it has been looking to the big picture, and to the support and encouragement of all Malay/Muslims in their efforts to improve their professional achievements, their economic successes, and their social stability.

The recent opening of the Fast Forward centre at MENDAKI Headquarters is a case in point. It is a collaborative effort with the National Productivity Board to teach basic skills, like Easy Maths, so that Malay/Muslim adults can upgrade their work skills.

MENDAKI's entry into the world of finance through Amanah Saham MENDAKI, and programmes that reflect our concern for the development of the family, are further examples of this wider view.

MENDAKI has also taken the Total Approach within the limits of its education programme.

Here, at Temasek Junior College, we see what efforts are being made to complement the education of the top 10 per cent of our PSLE candidates.

But, as I speak, parallel efforts are being made to help those students who have not done so well for one reason or another.

At centres around Singapore, pupils from the middle level of achievement are being assessed for appropriate classes in MENDAKI's Weekend Tuition scheme.

This afternoon, at Bedok Town Secondary School, the organisers of MENDAKI's latest education-support programme are planning enrichment strategies for selected students already in Secondary One.

However, we cannot talk about a strategy for Total Development if our activities are scattered and isolated. There is therefore a need for MENDAKI to co-ordinate these programmes under one banner. I believe MENDAKI is actively looking into this.

I have been told that under this banner, chairmen of the various MENDAKI education programmes will be working together, exchanging information and practical experience, and seeking that vital multiplier factor that comes from effective cooperation. All this gives added energy to MENDAKI's efforts to serve the Malay/Muslim community.

And talking of the multiplier effect, it brings us back to our present concern: the launching of MENDAKI's second Enrichment Programme.

To the students gathered here, my advice is: derive whatever you can from the Programme. It is strongly in your own interests to take advantage of that multiplier effect. Whatever efforts you make on your own behalf, with the cooperation of MENDAKI officials and mentors, will be enriched and you will receive handsome dividends.

To the parents: your cooperation with MENDAKI is a sound and responsible investment in your children's future and the well-being of our community.

To the mentors: my big "thank you" for your dedication and selflessness.

May you all, always, succeed in your endeavours.

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