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SPEECH BY MRS YU-FOO YEE SHOON

SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AT THE UNION OF TELECOMS EMPLOYEES OF SINGAPORE

17TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER AND DANCE

AT MANDARIN BALLROOM, SINGAPORE MANDARIN HOTEL

SATURDAY, 30 OCT 99, 8.00 PM

Good evening

Mr Chua Miang Teo, President of UTES

Mr Tong Kok Yeo, General Secretary, UTES

Ladies and gentlemen.

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I am indeed very glad to be here with you tonight to celebrate Union of Telecoms Employees of Singapore 17th anniversary.

Looking back, your union has experienced many changes in the past 17 years. UTES was formed into a house union 1982. Today, you are an industrial union. I would like to congratulate the union and the management for the cordial relationship you have established. However, we should not take this for granted. It is necessary and important that this relationship continue to remain harmonious and co-operative so that you could face the competition and challenges ahead of you. I am pleased to note that earlier this year, SingTel Management and UTES signed a renewed commitment to a shared vision statement. It clearly indicates the resolve and determination of both parties to work closely and collaboratively together in partnership so as to win together in the next millennium.

Today, technology is changing very rapidly, especially in the areas of telecommunications. UTES must encourage your members to continue to upgrade themselves to remain relevant and employable. The service standard provided by SingTel and SingPost has been very good. As there are more competitors coming into the industry, you have to continuously strive to improve on your products and service. A positive attitude towards changes is important. This will lead to creative thinking and will to challenge new frontiers.

The telecommunications industry is in the process of being transformed by external forces. Computing is exerting an increasing influence on the industry. This is also a plethora of new uses that can be put onto the global telecommunications network. One such example is "web hosting", which is the delivery of computer software on demand over the network. As the telecommunications industry undergoes transformation, workers in the industry must learn, re-learn and occasionally re-invent your knowledge base, in order to stay relevant in a constantly changing global environment. This is the concept of life-long learning.

Life-long learning is particularly relevant to workers in the Information and Communications Technologies, or ICT, sector. The ICT industry is built on constant innovation and workers are thus vulnerable to rapid knowledge obsolescence. Part of this innovation is driven by the new emerging technologies that will profoundly affect the industry. One example is the third-generation wireless communications technology that will allow networks to carry broadband data as effortlessly as voice. Another example is the wireless technology called Bluetooth, which will permit high-speed communications among any type of devices within a 10-metre area. There are also business innovations. The business focus will change over time and not remain on the traditional telecommunications areas. New business opportunities will emerge for telecommunications companies.

To take advantage of these opportunities, worker re-training is of primary importance. Companies must be committed to the re-training of their workers on new skills. As workers in the telecommunications industry, you must also be adaptable and receptive to re-training. You must therefore seize the opportunities to continually upgrade yourself. Through this partnership, we will be able to meet the changing demands and needs of the telecommunications industry."

I am happy to note that your union has a new logo to reflect your new status

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as an industrial union. I hope your union will continue to work hand in hand with the management to improve the status of workers you are representing.

I am also happy that your union has raised \$100,000 for your charity projects. This is indeed worth commenting. Your union has a kind heart.

You have done well in the past and I am confident that you will continue to achieve higher goals and excel in your field.

I wish all of you a pleasant and enjoyable evening.

Thank you.

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