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SPEECH BY DR YEO NING HONG, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION AND SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE (POLICY) AT THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF NATION-WIDE ISDN AND INTERNATIONAL ISDN AT COMCENTRE ON 28 DECEMBER 1989 AT 5.30 PM

NATION-WIDE ISDN
THE WORLD'S FIRST

Today we take one more step towards 1999, one more step towards achieving our Vision 99. Today Singapore becomes the first country in the world to introduce nation-wide Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN). We enter 1990, the 25th year of our Independence, our Silver Anniversary, with this new milestone in the development of telecommunication infrastructure in Singapore. It is therefore my pleasure to launch the nation-wide ISDN service.

Singapore has established itself as a global communications hub. Our port has been the world's busiest in terms of shipping tonnage since 1986.

Our airport has been ranked tops in 1988 and 1989 by international travellers. Our telecommunication infrastructure has also been highly rated. For example, in the 1989 World Competitiveness Report published jointly by the International Management Development Institute (IMEDI) and World Economic Forum, both based in Geneva, Switzerland: For Telecommunications Infrastructure Requirements developed for the needs of companies competing internationally, Singapore was awarded a total of 98.06 points out of a maximum of 100 points. This exceeded the next highest, Canada and the US,

both with 94.55 points. Because of the classification, Singapore was ranked first amongst the newly industrialised economies: Canada and the US ranked joint first amongst the developed countries. (Annex) Our international telephone and telex rates continue to be amongst the lowest in the world, in many cases way below those of corresponding incoming calls.

These achievements did not come about by accident. They are the result of anticipation of worldwide trends, and systematic planning to meet the changing international needs and challenges. However, notwithstanding our success thus far, we must not rest on our laurels. We must press on. Today's inauguration of nation-wide ISDN is an illustration of this spirit.

What is nation-wide ISDN? What does it mean? It means, beginning today, any telephone subscriber in Singapore, residential or business, can subscribe to and be connected to a sophisticated high capacity telecommunication network that can carry voice, video, and data communication. No other country has this facility available to all its telephone subscribers. What can we use ISDN for? For high speed transfer of computer data, for high quality facsimile, for video telephones, for tele-conferencing, for tele-alarms, tele-control systems, and so on. The ISDN line is just the medium, the network, much like PUB's power line. The use of electricity is limited only by the imagination of man and the availability of equipment. So too the ISDN line.

Why do we need ISDN? The ordinary telephone line was designed primarily for voice. It cannot handle high speed and high volume data transmission which are necessary for computer and video communication. Computers, printers, fax machines, and other automation systems are already an integral part of life in Singapore in our homes and offices. An ISDN line is

needed for us to use all these equipment to communicate with one another, cheaply and conveniently.

What does nation-wide ISDN mean for the businessman? Yesterday, for a high speed data link, users can lease a special 64 Kbps local circuit for point to point data transmission, e.g. from head office A to branch office B or factory C. Each one of such links, A-B, A-C, or B-C costs \$600 a month. This is affordable only by big companies with high volume transmission requirements. Today, the user subscribing to nation-wide ISDN pays only \$80 per month for the same capability, with a small additional charge of 10 cents a minute of usage. And as a bonus, instead of a point to point connection, as in a leased circuit, the ISDN subscriber is connected to all other ISDN subscribers in Singapore. The quality of images and text is much better; reliability is increased. And all these at about 1/7 the cost.

With our nation-wide ISDN, today we launch our international ISDN service also. This is useful especially for Singapore businesses. As a start, ISDN users here can link up with ISDN users in those cities in Japan which offer the ISDN, with significant cost savings. For example, a 10-page document faxed to Tokyo through the normal telephone line, takes about 500 seconds and costs about \$25. With ISDN Group 4 fax machines, those same pages will take about 80 seconds to reach Tokyo and cost only \$4.90, a savings of 80 per cent. Imagine what it is like for a company sending say 5,000 pages a year. It will save about \$10,000 annually.

The nation-wide ISDN will benefit all our businesses and help them improve their competitive edge. It is especially helpful to the small and medium enterprises, which until today, could not afford the much more expensive point to point leased line for data transfer. I would urge all owners

and managers of small and medium enterprises to visit Comcity, to see for themselves how nation-wide ISDN can help them increase their productivity and competitiveness. Singapore Telecom staff would only be too happy to assist them.

The immediate benefits of ISDN are immense. It will enhance Singapore's international competitiveness and improve our quality of life. But the greatest benefit of all from ISDN is its potential. The range of ISDN services will only be limited by man's imagination and consumer demand. Within the next few years, new applications and products will be developed both for businesses and for the general public. With our nation-wide ISDN in place, we can assimilate such technological developments and make available any new services without undue delay.

To conclude, let me congratulate the team of engineers in Singapore Telecom who have made nation-wide ISDN possible in Singapore. They have won for Singapore another World's First. By taking the lead in applying the latest state-of-the-art, they have also helped realise the vision we all share for our nation. They can be proud of their achievements.

It is my pleasure to launch officially our Nation-wide ISDN.

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Factor I - Dynamism of the Economy

Supporting Installations

Criterion	1.29	Survey	1.30	Survey	1.31	Survey	1.32	Survey	1.33	Survey
INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS Extent to which infrastructure is developed for the needs of a company competing internationally (0 = inadequate, to 100 = adequate)										
	Roads		Railroads		Air transport		Telecommunications		Power supply	
Countries/Regions	Ranking		Ranking		Ranking		Ranking		Ranking	
AUSTRALIA	64.44	13	54.81	14	73.58	12	84.81	6	87.41	10
AUSTRIA	70.00	9	50.00	16	54.38	17	62.50	18	80.00	16
BELGIUM/LUX.	90.00	1	70.91	8	75.91	9	70.00	17	89.55	6
CANADA	84.48	5	77.54	7	86.97	4	94.55	1	96.06	1
DENMARK	85.37	3	84.88	1	86.34	5	90.24	4	93.17	2
FINLAND	66.00	11	70.77	9	74.36	10	84.10	8	83.08	14
FRANCE	65.45	12	79.74	4	71.17	14	82.86	9	89.35	8
GERMANY	87.45	2	79.72	5	79.59	8	74.03	13	86.39	11
GREECE	44.85	19	16.36	22	60.00	15	39.39	20	60.00	20
IRELAND	31.43	20	42.45	17	57.55	16	73.47	14	75.51	17
ITALY	61.79	14	21.43	21	43.21	22	35.27	22	49.82	21
JAPAN	48.00	17	84.50	2	52.25	19	87.50	5	90.75	5
NETHERLANDS	67.81	10	77.81	6	89.69	3	79.69	11	89.38	7
NEW ZEALAND	81.54	6	64.62	11	80.00	7	84.62	7	87.69	9
NORWAY	47.89	18	56.32	13	73.16	13	81.05	10	91.05	4
PORTUGAL	24.21	22	24.74	18	48.42	21	44.74	19	48.42	22
SPAIN	28.42	21	22.37	20	50.00	20	38.16	21	67.11	18
SWEDEN	71.90	8	64.05	12	82.78	6	92.15	3	84.30	13
SWITZERLAND	79.53	7	81.71	3	89.77	2	78.76	12	85.47	12
TURKEY	55.83	15	24.17	19	52.50	18	71.67	15	63.33	19
UNITED KINGDOM	54.05	16	51.62	15	73.78	11	71.62	16	82.97	15
USA	85.23	4	68.18	10	92.50	1	94.55	1	92.27	3
BRAZIL	56.00	5	18.41	10	73.02	3	67.94	5	63.17	5
HONG KONG	65.93	3	66.42	1	76.43	2	94.74	2	92.63	2
INDIA	38.29	9	57.14	4	50.86	9	29.71	10	33.71	10
INDONESIA	38.10	10	28.57	8	59.05	5	40.00	7	47.62	9
KOREA	57.65	4	58.04	3	51.76	8	72.55	4	73.33	4
MALAYSIA	71.50	2	55.00	5	72.50	4	75.50	3	74.00	3
MEXICO	42.11	7	18.42	9	49.47	10	36.84	8	48.95	8
SINGAPORE	94.84	1	59.09	2	100.00	1	98.06	1	92.90	1
TAIWAN	50.61	6	51.43	6	58.78	6	61.63	6	59.59	6
THAILAND	39.43	8	31.67	7	56.67	7	34.44	9	54.44	7