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**SPEECH BY MR HO KAH LEONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY (EDUCATION), AND CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE TO
PROMOTE THE USE OF MANDARIN, AT THE OPENING OF
THE 1985 SPEAK MANDARIN CAMPAIGN MONTH
AT THE SINGAPORE CONFERENCE HALL
ON SATURDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 1985 AT 8.00 PM**

On behalf of the Committee to Promote the Use of Mandarin, I wish to thank the Hon Mr Ong Teng Cheong, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary-General, NTUC, for being present here tonight to officiate at the opening of this year's Speak Mandarin Month, and all of you who are here to grace the occasion.

Following the launching of this year's Speak Mandarin Month, the campaign is entering its seventh year. Being carried out with great enthusiasm in the Chinese community over the past six years, it has won the support of various quarters with positive increase in the number of Mandarin-speaking Chinese. We realise that it is not possible for the campaign to achieve the objective of changing the deep-rooted dialect-speaking habit of the people within a short period of time. Therefore, greater efforts should be made to really replace dialects with Mandarin.

It is right and proper for Chinese to speak Mandarin. Entrenched in Mandarin is a Chinese culture with a history of more than 3,000 years. Like Western science and technology, this magnificent cultural heritage transcends national boundaries. While learning English to absorb the advanced science and technology of the West, we must not forget to preserve our own cultural roots and fine traditions, because they embody the Oriental values which

form the basis of our proper human behaviour. Speaking Mandarin is conducive to the development of the splendid Chinese culture. As Chinese, we should feel proud to be able to speak Mandarin.

Following China's open-door policy, learning Mandarin has become popular in many countries. There is always an excellent environment for the learning of Mandarin in Singapore. For those who can speak Mandarin, we hope that they will, apart from speaking Mandarin more often, pay attention to speaking more standard Mandarin. For those who speak no Mandarin, it is our hope that they will learn to do so as soon as possible in order not to lag behind the times.

In conjunction with tonight's opening ceremony, the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry is holding an exhibition of teaching materials and aids for the learning of Mandarin. Those who aspire to learn Mandarin well should not miss the exhibition.

Lastly, I wish to record my thanks to various units, the Ministry of Communications and Information, the NTUC and the National Transport Workers' Union in particular, for their contribution in the organization of tonight's function.

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