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15-3/94/09/05

SPEECH BY MR GOH CHEE WEE, MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
TRADE & INDUSTRY AND COMMUNICATIONS,  
AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR RADIO UNION (IARU)  
9TH REGION 3 CONFERENCE  
ON 5 SEP 94, 9.00 AM AT APOLLO HOTEL

Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to be here this morning to officiate at the opening ceremony for the International Amateur Radio Union's 9th Regional Conference for countries in Asia, Oceania and the Far East.

2 One of man's most significant discoveries has been the ability to communicate with one another using the invisible radio waves that surround us. Radiocommunication has created an immeasurable impact on many aspects of our lives. It plays an important role in facilitating safety and disaster relief efforts, as well as national defence and security concerns. It allows us to witness events taking place half-way around the world in real time. It also makes possible the provision of seamless, reliable and portable business and residential communications.

3 Radiocommunication technologies have developed rapidly. The use of digitalization techniques mean that more signals can be sent and received more clearly over radio waves. Developments in satellite technology also heralds the eminent emergence of

seamless, convenient, and integrated cross-border communications through air waves. These developments elevate the importance of radiocommunications when compared with line-based communications. In addition, increased usage of radiocommunications also does away with the need to spend much time and resources to lay extensive telecommunication cables and networks.

4 All these developments point toward radiocommunication as being the technology of the future. Recognising this trend, it is only appropriate that we should nurture the activities of amateur radio. There are two good reasons for doing so.

5 Firstly, it gives radio enthusiasts, those who are young and young at heart, the opportunity to experiment, explore and study the many untouched facets of amateur radio. Amateur radio organisations play an important role in planting the seeds of innovation in the minds of enthusiastic young people who may one day make this hobby a career and contribute significantly to advancement in the field of radiocommunications.

6 Secondly, experience has shown that amateur radio operators make important contributions to society. Their amateur radio skills have proved to be a useful back-up resource to many governments and public agencies around the world. In times of emergency and distress, or when other radiocommunication facilities fail, amateur radio operators could help to facilitate communications and play a role of great significance.

7 The Telecommunication Authority of Singapore (TAS) is the

licensing and regulatory authority for telecommunications in Singapore. TAS is given the task of ensuring that Singaporeans continue to enjoy reliable, interference-free radiocommunications. TAS monitors the use of the radio frequency spectrum for all purposes and sets technical standards and criteria for radiocommunication station users. Such measures are necessary to ensure that all users of the airwaves, be they public cellular mobile service subscribers or amateur radio enthusiasts, enjoy good quality radiocommunications.

8       TAS gazetted the new 1994 Radiocommunication Regulations last month. In the new set of regulations, the age limit of eligible applicants for amateur station licence has been lowered from 21 to 16. Other changes in the regulations include the creation of two classes of amateur station licence: a basic class and a more advanced one; and sizeable discounts in licence fees for students. All these changes are part of TAS's continuing effort to encourage more Singaporeans to take up the worthwhile activity of experimenting with amateur radiocommunications.

9       In Singapore, over 60% of the 90-odd amateur radio station operators licensed by TAS are Singaporeans. We hope that with the right level of encouragement, more will come forward to take up this activity and contribute towards a more vibrant amateur radio scene in Singapore in the years to come.

10       The IARU conference will explore ways to further promote amateur radio operations and to elevate its status among the public as a rewarding activity. I applaud and support this

objective, and wish the conference every success. Let me also take this opportunity to welcome all among you who travelled specially to Singapore for this event. I hope that you have an enjoyable stay in Singapore.

11 It is now my pleasure to declare the IARU 9th Region 3 Conference open.

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