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SPEECH BY MR ABDULLAH TARMUGI

MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AT THE SINGAPORE YACHTING ASSOCIATION

ASIAN GAMES CELEBRATION DINNER

THURSDAY 28 JAN 99, 6.30 PM

NATIONAL SAILING CENTRE

Good evening

Ladies and gentlemen

My wife and I are very happy to join all of you at this Celebration Dinner. Let me first congratulate SYA and your sailors for a job very well done.

2 Singapore's achievements at the 13th Asian Games in Bangkok was the best for our sailors since 1969, when they brought glory to the nation by winning their first medal at the 5th SEAP Games in Burma (now Myanmar).

3 At last year's Asian Games, our sailors won 2 golds, 1 silver and 3 bronzes. Six out of a total medal haul of 14 medals won by the whole Singapore contingent. Singapore ranked 2nd best in sailing out of a field of 15 nations. This is a great achievement for a nation of only three million people.

4 I wish to congratulate Siew Shaw Her/Colin Ng, Naomi Tan/Joan Huang, Anthony Kiong, Tracey Tan, Roy Tay, Tan Wearn Haw and Charles Lim on their brilliant performances. Recognition must also go to Koh Seng Leong and Tan Wenqi for giving off their best in their respective races even though they did not win any medals. We are all proud of you.

5 Sailing is a healthy sport that the schools, SYA and its affiliates should actively promote. Sailing builds character, perseverance, endurance and independence, as well as sharpens one's decision-making ability. Perhaps more than any other sport, sailing brings out the nature lover in you. When you are out there in the open sea – enjoying the warmth of the sun on your face, the wind on your back and sea splashing on you – you can truly feel at one with nature. It is an uplifting experience to be out at sea in a sailing boat.

6 I hope the SYA will continue to aggressively promote sailing in schools and to the general public, so that Singaporeans can continue to enjoy the sport, as well as groom more sailors to bring honour to Singapore.

7 We are gathered here tonight at this New Sailing Centre. It was built at a cost of \$8 million, funded by the government and Singapore Pools through the Singapore Sports Council. When fully operational by March, the Centre will provide additional facilities to sailors and to a sport that is gaining popularity here. I urge our schools, associations, and clubs, especially the Junior Sailing Club of the Ministry of Education, to make full use of these facilities and turn it into a beehive for sailing in Singapore.

8 While we celebrate the victory of the Asian Games, I would like to urge the SYA to set their sights even higher by developing more champions, and encouraging more Singaporeans to take up sailing. I am happy to note that SYA has a good tradition of sailors who continue to contribute to the sport even though they have retired from active competition. For example, Ng Ser Miang, silver medallist at the 5th SEAP Games, spent two years as President of SYA and one year with Changi Sailing Club building up the sport. Now, as Chairman of the Sports Council since 1993, Ser

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Miang is still actively promoting sailing and sports in Singapore. Credit should also go to Peter Lim and Ong Siang Kai, who have continued, after Ser Miang, to lead the SYA and to develop sailing in Singapore. Credit also goes to Siew Shaw Her, who, fresh from his Asian Games success, turned coach immediately after he returned from Bangkok, to guide Joan Huang at the recent ISAF World Youth Championship in South Africa.

9 The Sports Council will continue to support sailing with funding, coaching, technical and management assistance so long as sailing continues its proud tradition.

10 I would like to conclude by encouraging the SYA, teachers, parents and students to take the challenge to turn this new Sailing Centre as the nursery for sailing to grow even stronger and more successful in the years to come.

11 I hope you have an enjoyable dinner and a pleasant evening.

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