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SPEECH BY MR YEO CHEOW TONG, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF TIBS' WOODLANDS DEPOT ON SATURDAY, 23 OCTOBER 1999 AT
1000hrs

1 It is a pleasure for me to join you this morning for the opening of TIBS' third and largest depot. It is the only depot in Singapore with multi-storey bus parking. Building the multi-storey bus park, which can easily accommodate 300 buses, helps to maximize land use in land-scarce Singapore.

2 As Ser Miang has said, the opening of this depot is a significant milestone for TIBS. Since its inauguration in 1982, TIBS has, through the years, introduced many new initiatives and has been a catalyst of change, setting several industry standards. Among these are safety features in buses, the electronic destination sign, more comfortable seats, the Bendy Bus and other customer-friendly features. All these changes augur well for the future of our public transport system, and contribute positively towards the Government's vision of a world-class transport system for Singapore.

3 While many initiatives have been taken both by the Government and the transport operators to make public transport attractive, we need to do more to make travelling by public transport hassle-free and indeed, a pleasant experience.

Leveraging on technology

4 The use of technology is a powerful means to enhance customer service for the commuting public. I commend TIBS for leveraging on technology to provide better customer service as well as to improve the efficiency of its operations. This new depot, which has an administration building, a multi-storey garage and a workshop, uses several advanced technological systems. These include a fully computerised on-line interactive Vehicle Management Information System (VMIS) for the workshop, a modern body repair centre equipped with two spray-painting

booths as well as a high-speed computerised re-fuelling system for the bus fleet.

5 The depot also houses Skytrek, TIBS' taxi tracking and despatch system using the state-of-the-art Global Positioning System (GPS). The launch of Skytrek in November 1995 was another significant milestone for TIBS.

6 In the not-too-distant future, this depot will also house TIBS' GPS-based integrated bus operating system. It will provide real-time travel information to TIBS' customers. This system will hence not only enhance the efficiency of TIBS' bus operations but also improve the level of service to its customers.

People Make the Difference

7 We may have in place the best systems, the best vehicles and the best technology that money can buy, but ultimately, it is the people who make the difference. A smile, a courteous act, a greeting, a nod of the head – all simple gestures, but nonetheless gestures that lift the spirit of the customer and make that journey that more pleasant.

8 In this regard, it is essential that TIBS continues to train and develop its people to provide excellent service to commuters all the time. I am happy to learn that an average TIBS' employee undergoes an average of about 80 training hours per year, as compared to the national average of 31.5 hours per employee.

9 This extensive training and the recognition given by the company have motivated more drivers to provide excellent service to customers. One good example is a Mr Foo Kim Ming. He was featured in the newspapers recently for his courteous behaviour. He greets his customers in their mother tongue, and takes the trouble to learn simple greetings in various languages, even in Thai. I congratulate TIBS for having such exemplary staff. We need more people like Mr Foo to help us achieve our goal of providing a world class public transport system to our fellow citizens.

10 On that note, I congratulate TIBS on the opening of this depot and also wish the company all the very best for the future. With that, it is now my great pleasure to declare the TIBS Woodlands Depot open.

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