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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by RAdm Teo Chee Hean, 11 Mar 00, 4 pm

# *Singapore Government*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**SPEECH BY RADM TEO CHEE HEAN, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION  
AND SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE AT THE [LEARN@ZOO](#)  
COMPETITION CUM OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE LEARNING  
CENTRE AT THE SINGAPORE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS ON  
SATURDAY 11 MARCH 2000 @ 4 PM**

National Archives of Singapore

Distinguished guests  
Ladies and gentlemen  
Boys and girls

I am happy to be at the zoo this afternoon. I have always enjoyed my visits to the zoo. It is a wonderful place for family outings and picnics where parents and their children can share a few precious hours together doing something that is both a great deal of fun, and a great educational experience. The Zoo is also one of the most popular places for school excursions and class outings and gatherings.

What is this fascination with the zoo? The answer is very simple. The

Singapore Zoo provides a soothing environment that helps us tune in to the world of nature, and gives us a respite from our hectic schedule and urban lifestyle.

Hence, it is my pleasure to be here this evening to open this Learning Centre and the [Learn@Zoo](#) event jointly organised by the Ministry of Education and the Singapore Zoological Gardens.

[Learn@Zoo](#) is the first activity to be carried out at this new Learning Centre. Today groups of primary and lower secondary students, armed with digital cameras have been busy snapping pictures and taking video clips of animals and plants. On closer observation, one would have seen them working on their computer notebooks producing a multimedia presentation based on their experiences in the zoo this afternoon.

Today's activity has provided our students with the opportunity to be observant and appreciate the environment they live in - paying attention to detail, spotting similarities and differences, grouping and classifying, and asking why. It has also given them a chance to collaborate with one another and consider each other's point of view in order to put the best idea forward, thus learning to interact effectively and cooperatively in their respective teams.

Today's event shows that learning need not be confined to the classrooms. It can take place anywhere and at any time.

The Singapore Zoological Gardens has provided rich learning resources which our schools have tapped. The Zoo is host to about 180 000 pupils annually. More than half of them also participate in the Zoo's educational enrichment classes. The programmes are interactive in nature, promoting interest in the life sciences and appreciation of the natural world.

This Learning Centre built at a cost of \$2 million will enable the Zoo to organise a wider range of activities and achieve its target of reaching out to at least 70% of its school visitors. Such programmes help us to create a holistic approach to learning so that we can produce students who are well-informed, skilful, innovative, responsible and environmentally conscious.

[Learn@Zoo](#) is part of a larger effort to encourage our citizens to embrace technology. I hope that as grown ups see our young using information technology with ease, they too will be encouraged to be in tune with IT as well. This event is therefore one of a wider range of activities in **eCelebrations Singapore** being

promoted by the Info-Communications Development Authority of Singapore to reach out to all Singaporeans.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all the students for their fine effort at today's [Learn@Zoo](#) event. It is now my pleasure to declare this Learning Centre at the Singapore Zoological Gardens open.

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