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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Mr Abdullah Tarmugi, 06 Apr 2000, 10am

# ***Singapore Government***

## ***PRESS RELEASE***

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**SPEECH BY MR ABDULLAH TARMUGI  
MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS  
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF BOAT AND METS ASIA 2000  
ON THURSDAY 6 APRIL 2000 AT 10.00 AM  
WORLD TRADE CENTRE**

National Archives of Singapore

Mr Bernd Aufderheide, Chairman,  
Board of Directors, Messe Düsseldorf Asia

Mr Wim van der Loo, Director, International Operations, Amsterdam RAI

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

I am very pleased to be here for the opening of boats and METS Asia 2000, Asia's premier boating, sea sports and marine equipment show.

2 I would like to extend a warm welcome to all the overseas participants from countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Netherlands, UK and USA who have been regular supporters of this event. With more than 200 participating companies and brands from over 20 countries, "boats and METS Asia" is indeed a very comprehensive and spectacular showcase for the marine trade and leisure industry.

3 In spite of the economic situation in the region last year, more than 35% visitors to "boats and METS Asia 1999" came from overseas. This testifies to the event's established standing as Asia's premier boating and marine leisure exhibition and augers well for Singapore's future as the venue for international and regional exhibitions.

4 The staging of such mega exhibitions with a sporting flavour and its various supporting events is in consonant with the government's initiative to promote a vibrant sports culture and industry in Singapore. My Ministry, which only 5 days ago became the Ministry of Community Development and Sports and the Singapore Sports Council are set on making sports an important facet of life in Singapore. Sports also contribute towards building Singapore into a world class home by providing Singaporeans with an added and exciting dimension for leisure and recreation. The Sports Council's Sports for Life programme offers a multitude of sports and exercise programmes for Singaporeans. The private sector can play an important role promoting sports and in the development of a vibrant sports culture and industry. The private sector should ride the wave of growth in the sports and leisure industry and take a more active role in creating new opportunities for Singaporeans to participate in sports, which should, of course, include sea sports.

5 The sea is very much a part of the history and development of this region. The early spice trade and Singapore's entrepot role which played a crucial part in the development of this region owed much to the sea. Its economic role and contribution is well established. What, perhaps, can be further explored and pursued is how we can take advantage of the seas around us for sports and recreation.

6 Within the South China Sea, the Straits of Malacca and the Gulf of

Thailand are thousands of islands which can offer the tourist sights, sounds and tastes as exotic and as varied as the cultures and traditions that are found in the region. This region therefore offers great potential for the development of sailing – either for sport or leisure – island-hopping, fishing and other sea-based sports and activities. Shows and exhibitions like this should position themselves to take advantage of opportunities in Singapore and the region.

7 Before I conclude, I would like to thank Messe Düsseldorf Asia and Amsterdam RAI for their sponsorship of the second Singapore Sea Sports Festival. The Festival is aimed at promoting all forms of sea sports to the public and highlighting the host of sea sports facilities and services available in Singapore. The first Sea Sports Festival drew more than 8,000 members of the public. I am sure that this year's Festival has been even more successful.

8 Finally, I wish the organiser, Messe Düsseldorf and the RAI Group continued success in all their future endeavours.

9 It is indeed my pleasure now to declare “boat and METS Asia 2000” open. Thank you.

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