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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Dr Aline Wong, 26 May 00, 11am

Singapore Government

MEDIA RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY DR ALINE WONG, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR
EDUCATION, AT THE LAUNCH OF MUSEUMFEST 2000 AT PARCO
BUGIS JUNCTION ON FRIDAY, 26 MAY 2000, AT 11.00AM**

Dr James Khoo, Chairman, Asian Civilisations Museum Board,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Boys and girls,

A very good morning to all of you. It is my pleasure to join you all this morning, for the official launch of the MuseumFest.

2 Museums are no longer just buildings that are used to store and exhibit objects of historic, scientific or cultural significance. Today, museums are also important learning environments, not only for our children but for all of us as well. Once held as the domain of the upper classes, museums today are for

everyone, be they children, housewives, young professionals, students, academics, or senior citizens.

3 Museums provide an informal environment for us to learn at our own pace. There are indeed close ties between museums and education. Besides the significant educational role that museums play, they are also places where families can learn together, thus creating stronger family bonds in the process. Museums are also places where people can learn a new skill such as pottery or weaving, or they can participate in a cultural activity such as joget, revisit their childhood by playing kampong or traditional games, and so on. For the more scientifically-inclined, they can go star gazing or wonder at many other aspects of the natural environment.

4 Children in particular benefit from the creative learning opportunities offered by museums. The many types of discovery learning expand the boundaries of their learning from the classroom to that of a worldwide experience. A visit to the museum takes learning out of the classroom and creates a sense of fun and discovery for everyone who does so.

5 As you can see, museums are not only about art, culture and heritage. They can also showcase the history of many aspects of our development, such as defence, urban renewal, transformation of our sea port, airport and so on. This is what the Museumfest is about. It presents a much broader landscape on the development of Singapore. Our museums are finally “letting their hair down” , so to speak, and attracting every sector of the community to be part of a fun-filled educational experience.

6 I understand that this year, 12 of our museums and galleries in Singapore have come together to organise this heritage extravaganza under the co-ordination of the National Heritage Board. This one-stop all-in-one MuseumFest will help to break down traditional barriers between different disciplines and increase general awareness of the many aspects of our history and heritage. It is also an excellent form of public outreach that brings museums out of the confines of their walls and generates greater public exposure to museums. This will in time encourage and cultivate a museum-going culture in Singapore.

7 The MuseumFest is a commendable effort by the Museum Roundtable members in collaborating to organise booth exhibitions as well as workshops, activities and even games to bring a light-hearted festival mood to an otherwise

serious topic.

8 In a world where we are bombarded with the dot.com fever, the onslaught of digitisation and virtual reality technology, this kind of festival brings home the point that whilst we want to harness the tangible benefits of technology, we should not let it replace intangibles such as our cultural roots and values.

9 I would like once again to congratulate the Museum Roundtable under the chairmanship of the National Heritage Board, for organising this exciting festival. I would also like to commend organisations like Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation and Parco Bugis Junction for being active corporate citizens in sponsoring and supporting this worthwhile cause. It is now my pleasure to declare the MuseumFest officially open.

National Archives of Singapore