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**PRESS RELEASE**

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SPEECH BY MR WAN HUSSIN ZOOHRI, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (HEALTH AND CULTURE) AT THE EAST ZONE SCHOOLS SPORTS COUNCIL'S COLOUR AWARDS CEREMONY AT DUNMAN HIGH SECONDARY SCHOOL ON 10 NOV 82 AT 10.00 AM

Singaporeans were once described as a society with a 'big head', a 'small heart' and 'weak legs'. This is not a complimentary tribute. Fortunately, over the years much have been done to change the Singaporean profile.

In this context, it is evidently clear that the schools can play a significant role. Although we are gathered here this morning to witness the achievements of our outstanding athletes in their respective fields, this affects only the selected few. More important is the physical and health status of the majority of our student population.

I am informed that two schemes are now in operation on a mass participation level in schools. One is the Physical Fitness Award Programme and the other is the Swimming Scheme. The results of these two schemes will only be seen a few years later. However, the more fundamental considerations behind these physical education schemes should not be overlooked.

Firstly, it is interesting to know whether the pupils on entering the adult world will continue to exercise or swim, that is, making it a life-long activity. Secondly, it is even more pertinent to see whether, as a result of the discipline and training they had in schools and the extent of their daily physical routine in life, they will continue having the right and proper attitude with regard to maintaining their own physical health in life. In other words, will keeping fit be their major consideration in life. Just as one is accustomed to reading or attached to a certain hobby or preoccupied with something which interests him, we

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should also expect the pupils to regard keeping fit through physical exercises as their second nature. The long-term benefits are indeed obvious...

Physical education together with health education have a positive bearing on the future health status of our society. Through regular exercises, proper dietary discipline and good health habits, we can guard against many of the health hazards that commonly affect us. In Singapore today, cancer is the main cause of deaths (20.8 per cent). Here, lung cancer is one of the three foremost forms of deaths through cancer. Second in rank is death due to Ischaemic and other heart diseases (20.4 per cent). Thus being affluent has its dangers too. Our sedentary life style makes us not only easy prey to physical complacency, laziness and inertness but more prone to untimely deaths.

It is therefore important that we instil in our pupils a high standard of health discipline. This is an investment which in the long run gives very high returns to the pupils and to the society. Individually, they will be able to enjoy a much healthier and, hopefully, a longer life. To the society, they help to contribute and enhance the preventive aspect of the health services that are being undertaken. In the final analysis, they contribute to turning Singaporeans into a more wholesome society. Our future profile will then be a society of not only well-educated citizens with human regard and compassion for our fellow beings but one which is physically strong and healthy - a generation of Singaporeans who are fit, practising the exercises they learn and enjoy the games they play. I am confident that the teachers and their pupils will together contribute in making physical education programmes in schools successful.

I wish to congratulate all the winners in this year's Colour Awards Ceremony.

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