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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**SPEECH BY DR TONY TAN KENG YAM, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION,  
AT THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF  
CHUNG CHENG HIGH SCHOOL  
ON SATURDAY, 15 JULY 1989 AT 10.00 AM**

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I am honoured to join you in celebrating this auspicious occasion - the 50th anniversary of the founding of Chung Cheng High School. The Golden Jubilee of a school is a significant milestone in its history, and, in the case of Chung Cheng High School, it marks fifty years of continuous growth and development and a tradition of scholarship that you can be proud of.

Beginning with a few hundred pupils in a bungalow in Kim Yam Road, Chung Cheng High School now caters to more than 2,000 pupils in the main and branch schools in Goodman Road and Guillemard Road. Chung Cheng can boast of many past pupils who have distinguished themselves in many professional and cultural fields.

The contribution of Chung Cheng High School to the education of the young people of Singapore was recognised in a very special way in 1979 when Chung Cheng was chosen to be one of the nine Special Assistance Plan Schools offering both English and Chinese as First Languages.

On an occasion like this today, you can look back on the many successes of the past and feel proud of the good standing the school has achieved among the Chinese community in Singapore. This is also an occasion for you to look forward and to ask yourselves what should be the future role of Chung Cheng High School.

All of you, I am sure, are aware of the tremendous changes that are going on in the world today, not only in Singapore, but also in the region around us. The world as we have known it since the Second World War is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Over the next five years changes will take place which will affect the course of history. In the midst of these changes it is necessary for us to be quite clear about how we should anchor the education of our children.

As I have stated in Parliament, bilingualism, the study of English and the mother-tongues is the corner stone of our education system. The study of English is important for three reasons :

First, for racial harmony.

In a multi-racial society like Singapore we need a common working language which all races understand and can use for communication with one another.

Second, for rapid economic development.

With English we can rapidly absorb technology from the West without the need for massive translation facilities which should be impossible for a small country like Singapore, and

Thirdly, to build up vital Institutions of State, such as the Singapore Armed Forces.

By having all the technical manuals and instructions in English, we were able to build up the SAF more quickly than if we had to translate the manual and instructions into three languages.

Without racial harmony, a strong economy and the SAF there would not be the prosperous thriving Singapore that we know today.

But while recognising the importance of English, we should also ensure that our children do not lose their cultural heritage. Our children should be aware of the customs and traditions of their ancestors. This will also help them to widen their perceptions and deepen their understanding of fellow Singaporeans who are of different races.

Just a few weeks ago we had a Pre-U Seminar on "Shared Values for All Singaporeans". During the Seminar, the young participants from many junior colleges and pre-university centres discussed many issues, some of them sensitive ones, which affect the building of a nation in Singapore. From such seminars and discussions, we can build an understanding and appreciation of the cultures and religions of the many races who live in Singapore. This understanding and appreciation can help us to build common interests which will bind us together as one nation.

The aim of our education system is to develop the potential of every child so that he or she can grow up to be a responsible and confident adult. Schools like Chung Cheng have therefore a very important role to play by welcoming pupils from all walks of life and of varying intellectual abilities. Every student has a role to play and can contribute to our society and economy. It is the task of our schools to help each child to make use of his or her talents and to guide him towards a profession and career which will enable him to look forward to satisfying and productive work in life.

Chung Cheng therefore should build on its strong foundation and develop in its pupils not only a firm grounding in traditional Chinese values but also a good

knowledge of English, Science and Mathematics and an understanding and appreciation of the multi-racial, multi-religious character of Singapore. Chung Cheng can build in its pupils an attitude of mind which accepts and can benefit from the diversity of talents and cultures of the people in Singapore.

In conclusion, may I commend the members of the School Management Board under the Chairmanship of Mr Goh Tjoei Kok, for their assistance and contribution towards the development and progress of Chung Cheng Main and Branch Schools. I would also like to thank the Principals, the teachers and the staff of Chung Cheng for their hard work and dedication which they have shown in the education of their pupils. To all the students, I wish you success in your studies. I hope that in future years when you have left school, you will look back on your days in Chung Cheng with pride and affection.

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