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**SPEECH BY PROFESSOR WEE CHOW HOU,
CHAIRMAN OF THE PROMOTE MANDARIN COUNCIL
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE 26TH SPEAK MANDARIN CAMPAIGN ON
TUESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2005
AT 11 AM AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY EVENTS PLAZA**

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong

Members of the Promote Mandarin Council

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

1. It is an honour to have the Prime Minister, who has launched several campaigns in the 26-year history of the Speak Mandarin Campaign, back to grace the event this year. This year, the campaign is going all out to engage English-speaking Chinese Singaporeans, particularly those in the ‘post-65’ generation with a fresh, lifestyle oriented approach, to drive home the ‘华语 (hua yu) COOL!’ message. It was the PM who first identified the post independence generation as a key group. As someone who has mastered both English and Mandarin, and uses both languages comfortably in both his professional and personal capacities, he is the best role model and spokesperson to deliver the message for this year’s campaign.

2. The campaign has come a long way, from its original objective – when it was first launched by then PM Lee Kuan Yew in 1979 – to encourage Chinese Singaporeans to speak Mandarin as a common language instead of dialects, to the focus in the last decade on the learning and usage of Mandarin to enhance

Singapore's competitiveness, and for Chinese Singaporeans to better understand and appreciate their heritage. Three years ago, the campaign made a bold move towards focusing on the current target group, and adopting a more hip and updated image.

3. The '华语 (hua yu) COOL!' message has evolved as a natural progression as the campaign continues to keep itself relevant. In today's world of the Internet, podcasting, and 3G mobile phones, being cool or *ku* has become more than being hip and trendy. It is also synonymous with keeping up with the times, trends and staying relevant and competitive. But many of those in the target group continue not to speak Mandarin because of a misconception that Mandarin is uncool from their younger days. Others simply do not have the opportunity to use Mandarin in their home, work or social environments. This year, more so than ever, the campaign is stepping up efforts to reach out to this group with a lifestyle-oriented approach that revolves around music, movies, theatre and leisure activities.

4. This has been made possible with the enthusiastic participation and generous support of the campaign's lineup of partners this year, many of which are leaders and trendsetters from the lifestyle, leisure and entertainment fields. Some examples are partners such as the Singapore Zoological Gardens, the new multi-concept entertainment complex St James Power Station, theatre outfits Toy Factory Ensemble and the ETCeteras, and bilingual manga publication Co-Co!, which have all come onboard for the first time to collaborate with the campaign. Other partners, such as Golden Village, Singapore Press Holdings, Nokia, and the

National Library Board have become faithful supporters of the campaign. Partners in the educational field, such as Eduplus, Popular Book Co, the Singapore Chinese Teachers' Union, WaWaYaYa Children's Education Software (by Creative) and World Scientific Publishing Co are instrumental in reaching out to students. The campaign is also fortunate to have the support of Straits Times with its weekly "Cool Speak" section and the Cool Speak Guide, Clear Channel Singapore, which is sponsoring advertising panels at bus shelters, Comfort Delgro, which is sponsoring advertising space on buses, and NTUC FairPrice, which will carry the campaign's message on its carrier bags, to create a strong presence and reach for its message. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all partners and supporters.

5. Apart from the partners and programmes, this year's three campaign ambassadors will also help to spread the '华语 (hua yu) COOL!' message. Actor and comedian Hossan Leong and Mandarin pop singer JJ Lin will appeal to the younger set, while Fanny Lai, Executive Director of the Singapore Zoo and Night Safari is an example of an English educated professional in the 'post-65' generation who has successfully leveraged the use of Mandarin for business and career opportunities.

6. In closing, I would like to appeal to English speaking Chinese Singaporeans to adopt an open mind and attitude towards speaking and using Mandarin. It is very natural to be more comfortable speaking in one language, especially when it is the language you use most often. I may be perceived as the face of the Speak Mandarin Campaign, but I can identify with you easily. I just

look at my own son, who was educated in both English and Mandarin at first language level in a SAP school, but now finds it more comfortable to converse in English because that is the language he uses most often at work and socially. The first step, I believe, is the hardest. Attempting to speak Mandarin again may be a challenge. But through the activities and programmes lined up this year, I hope to convince this group of people that there are many benefits to gain from taking that first step. In English, the saying goes that “Rome was not built in a day”. It takes time, patience and persistence. In Mandarin, we say “shu neng sheng qiao” – the more you try and practice, the more familiar, comfortable and adept you will become. So use it, don’t lose it.

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黄昭虎教授（推广华语理事会主席）演讲稿
第 26 届推广华语运动推介会
2005 年 11 月 15 日，星期二，上午 11 时
国家图书馆活动大厦

李显龙总理

推广华语理事会成员

女士和先生们

早上好

1. “讲华语运动”已经迈入第 26 个年头了，总理李显龙先生曾多次为这个运动主持开幕礼。今天，我们很荣幸地再次邀请到他莅临现场。今年运动的对象仍是常说英语的新加坡华人，尤其是 1965 年国家独立后出生的一代。我们将透过以时尚为本、让人耳目一新的方式来传达“华语 COOL”的信息。总理是第一个把独立后一代锁定为主要对象的人，他精通中英文，无论是公务或私事，他都能自在地游走于两种语文之间。他当然是传达今年“讲华语运动”主题的最佳人选。

2. 一步一脚印，“讲华语运动”确实走了好长的一段路。它最初于 1979 年由当时的总理李光耀推出时，旨在鼓励不同籍贯的新加坡华人少使用方言，转而以华语为共同语言。过去 10 年来，学习和使用华语的焦点则是提高新

加坡的竞争力，并让新加坡华人更了解和珍惜优良的传统。三年前，运动又跨进一步，大胆地把目标锁定在目前的目标身上，并以更时髦的全新形象示人。

3. “华语 COOL” 信息是“讲华语运动”与时俱进过程的自然产品。目前，互联网、联播网（podcasting）和 3G 手机充斥市场，cool 或酷不只是时髦，它也代表了与时俱进、追得上潮流和维持竞争力。然而，由于我们的对象从小就误以为华语是不酷的，至今还有不少人不说华语。还有一些人根本没有在家里、工作场所和社交场合使用华语的机会。今年的“讲华语运动”犹胜过往的是，它更不遗余力地通过以时尚为本的方式传达信息，包括结合音乐、电影、戏剧和消闲活动。

4. 这些都得完全归功于今年运动伙伴的积极参与和支持，他们当中不乏时尚、消闲和娱乐界的佼佼者以及带动潮流的单位与个人，包括新加坡动物园、新的综合娱乐城圣占姆士发电厂 (St James Power Station)、戏剧团体 Toy 肥料厂和海燕等人以及双语漫画出版 Co-Co! 它们都是首次与“讲华语运动”合作的伙伴。其他的伙伴，如嘉华电影城、新加坡报业控股、诺基亚以及国家图书馆则是“讲华语运动”的忠诚支持者。我们教育方面的伙伴，如爱的伯乐语文学校、大众书局有限公司、新加坡华文教师会、创新科技所开发的 WaWaYaYa 儿童教育软件以及世界科技出版公司，都是我们把信息传达给学生的重要伙伴。这次的运动也很荣幸地获得《海峡时报》“Cool Speak”版和 Cool Speak Guide 的支持，还有新加坡 Clear Channel 赞助的巴士站广告以及康福德高企业赞助的巴士广告，而职总平价合作社也将在它的购物袋上印制

“华语 COOL” 的信息，加强运动的渗透率并让更多人接收运动的信息。我要借这个机会向所有伙伴和支持者表达由衷的谢意。

5. 除了伙伴和活动，今年运动的三名大使也将协助传播“华语 COOL” 的信息。艺人和喜剧演员梁荣耀(Hossan Leong)以及华语流行歌坛歌手林俊杰对较年轻的人有一定的号召力，而新加坡动物园和夜间野生动物园执行董事赖威敏则是成功应用华语于商业和事业上的楷模，她也是个于国家独立后出生的英校生。

6. 最后，我希望常讲英语的新加坡华人能以开放的胸襟和态度对待华语，多使用华语。擅长某个语言，特别是常用的语言，这是最自然不过的了。我或许已被等同于“讲华语运动”，但我完全感同身受。我的儿子曾在一所特选学校受教育，他的中英文同为第一语文。不过，由于英语是他工作和进行社交活动时常用的语言，以英语与人交谈时，他觉得更自在。我相信跨出第一步是最困难的；尝试再次讲华语也可能是项挑战。不过，通过我们今年所精心策划的活动和项目，我希望说明：跨出第一步其实可带来不少好处。有句英语老话是这么说的：“罗马不是一天建成的”，它需要时间、耐性和坚持。

“熟能生巧”这个成语也指出，经过历次的尝试和实践后，就越觉得熟悉和得心应手。能用华语是福气，别失去。

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