

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

## **SPEAK MANDARIN CAMPAIGN 2004 TARGETS POST 65-ERS WITH “华语 COOL” THEME**

**Singapore, 6 December 2004:** It is cool to speak Mandarin. This is the key message the Speak Mandarin Campaign wants to drive home this year to the target group of English educated, post-Independence generation of Chinese Singaporeans, who currently do not use or speak Mandarin.

To be launched on 13 December 2004 by Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, the Speak Mandarin Campaign, which celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year, aims to encourage this group, which has traditionally been the hardest to reach, to speak and learn Mandarin by making it fun and part of everyday life. The campaign also aims to reach out to young Chinese Singaporeans who are currently speaking Mandarin, but only at a functional and conversational level, to build their proficiency in the language and inspire them to develop an interest in Chinese culture.

Through these efforts, the campaign aims to contribute towards building a community with a strong command of the language and an appreciation of Chinese culture, tradition and history.

In order to connect with and engage the target audience – young professionals and parents in their 20s, 30s and 40s, as well as students - this year's campaign will be taking a bold move toward updating its image. This will be done through new and novel ways of learning Mandarin, arts and entertainment programmes, and an updated theme and tagline: “华语 Cool. Use It, Don't Lose It.”

Said Professor Wee Chow Hou, Chairman, Promote Mandarin Council: “Mandarin is “cool” in more ways than one. It is “cool” in the way the English word is used in pop culture to describe something that is hip and trendy. With Chinese culture becoming an increasingly important influence on global culture, Mandarin is definitely “in”, or “酷” (ku), as the Chinese call it. In Mandarin, there is another word 库 (ku) which is often used to connote “a store of treasure”. Indeed, Mandarin is an emotive, succinct and visual language, and it is truly a store of linguistic and cultural treasure waiting to be explored and mastered”.

Apart from these two key messages, i.e., that Mandarin is hip and relevant, and mastering the language will enable Chinese Singaporeans to connect to their roots, the campaign will also

reiterate the point that Mandarin is a useful language for business and career. Proficiency in the language and knowledge of Chinese culture will open the door to the economic, business and career opportunities brought about by a rapidly growing China.

### Events and Programmes

Leveraging on pop culture, the arts and reading, a series of events and programmes have been lined up to engage the target audience for this year's campaign. The highlights include the Mandarin Moviethon to be held at Golden Village cinemas on 18th December 2004, and a series of Mandarin Movie Appreciation Screenings where entertaining Art house Mandarin movies will be screened, with introductions before and lively question-and-answer sessions after each screening, hosted by well-known critics and film personalities.

Television viewers can expect to see more innovative and fun ways of learning Mandarin with a special four-part game show produced by MediaCorp, The 华语 Cool Game Show, on Channel 5, featuring familiar Channel 8 faces such as hosts Sharon Au and Allan Wu.

To encourage Singaporeans to use and learn Mandarin through the print media, there will be a special daily "Cool Speak" feature specially created by the Straits Times from 13th to 17th December 2004. This is under the umbrella of the regular Friday "Cool Speak" run by the Straits Times to encourage readers to learn Mandarin. In addition, a special comic strip will be published in *Lianhe Zaobao*.

### Artist Tan Swie Hian

Tan Swie Hian has again come forward to support the Speak Mandarin Campaign by creating the campaign image which effectively reflects '华语 cool'. This is the artist's generous contribution to the vision of the campaign this year. This image will be carried in all campaign collaterals by the campaign's partners to promote the message of '华语 cool'.

### Campaign Ambassadors

This year's campaign ambassadors are optometrist turned singer Joi Chua and hip hop sensation, *choupijiang* – faces the target audience will be familiar with. They will share about how speaking Mandarin and tapping into their Chinese culture and roots have helped them achieve success in their careers. They will also perform the Speak Mandarin Campaign theme song composed by *choupijiang* at the launch. In addition, Joi will perform the song "I Hope To Hear You Speak" composed by acclaimed song-writer and literary figure Liang Wern Fook.

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**About Speak Mandarin Campaign**

The Speak Mandarin Campaign (SMC) was launched by then Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew in 1979. Now into its 26th year, the Speak Mandarin Campaign is a year-round campaign, focusing on creating awareness through publicity and getting community involvement. Several programmes to facilitate the learning of Mandarin have been introduced. This included publications/resources such as CD-ROMs and tapes of Mandarin lessons for people who are keen to learn Mandarin, handbooks of English-Chinese terms and telephone Mandarin lessons. More information on SMC can be found on [www.mandarin.org.sg](http://www.mandarin.org.sg)

**About National Library Board**

The National Library Board (NLB) was established on 1 September 1995 with the mission to continuously expand the learning capacity of the nation. NLB oversees the management of the National Library, three regional libraries, 18 community libraries, 18 community children's libraries, as well as libraries belonging to government agencies, schools and private institutions. Its digital library, eLibraryHub, provides patrons access to information resources and services any time, anywhere. Through its innovative use of technology and its collaboration with strategic partners, the NLB ensure that library users have access to a rich array of information services and resources that are convenient, accessible and useful. More information on NLB can be found on [www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg)

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