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## NEWS RELEASE

### “GOOD ENGLISH !CONS” TO SHOW THE WAY

***Speaking Good English the Fun Way. Speak Good English Movement Celebrates 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by Getting “Good English !cons” Into the Act***

“Good English !cons” will show the way by encouraging Singaporeans to speak good English as the Speak Good English Movement celebrates its 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The “Good English !cons” will show that learning and speaking good English can be easy and fun if Singaporeans were to speak out more often.

The “Good English !cons” are a cross-section of Singaporeans who recognise the importance of speaking good English, who speak it every day, and who wish to share their experiences with fellow Singaporeans. They include rappers, a professional gamer, the “father” of break-dancing in Singapore, TV and radio personalities, a taxi-driver, as well as parents and children. (The list of “Good English !cons” can be found in the Fact Sheet at **Annex A**).

To “Good English !con”, Paramajothi Prasad, 21-year old full-time gamer and Captain of Team TiTans, there is a place for good English even in the IT gaming world. “Speaking good

English helps gamers and cyber-athletes like me a lot. For one, we're able to communicate what gaming is all about to a wider audience. Two, as a professional gamer, good English comes in handy when we're out seeking sponsors! And finally, English is the 'official' language at international gaming competitions."

Fellow "Good English Icons", rappers from top local rap group, Triple Noize, "Shahfii" (Shahfii Bin Mohamed Ali, 26 years old) and "Rama" (Ramachandran s/o Srigadan, 27 years old), also found good English valuable in their "trade". "English is important in our work as songwriters and rappers. People may not realize it, but the right choice of words and how to pronounce them is essential in rapping," said "Rama".

This year, the Movement will focus its efforts on parents, teachers, "leaders" at the workplace (such as Human Resource and Training Managers and Supervisors) and others who are in a position to encourage the speaking of good English at work and at play. The Movement hopes that these individuals will be able to make Singaporeans more confident in the use of proper English so as to be better understood.

Steering the Speak Good English Movement is its new Chairperson, Professor Koh Tai Ann (Professor of English Literature at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dean of Students, Nanyang Technological University). Professor Koh took up her appointment on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2005 replacing Mr David Wong who has led the Movement for five years since its inception in May 2000.

"It is vital for Singaporeans, especially our youth who are all English-educated, to speak good English of a standard variety that is universally understood, such that we can remain competitive in the region and globally, as the service industries become increasingly important to our economy. It is easy to speak good English. The first step is just to speak it the way we all have been taught in English class at school. The more one speaks standard English, the more confidence one gains in speaking it. In time, it becomes habitual," said Professor Koh.

"To show that it is not difficult, but a matter of making it part of oneself and part of the positive impression one makes on others, we have identified some fellow Singaporeans who are performing artistes and others who are ordinary Singaporean workers. Like most of us, they use English in the course of their work. They want to, and do speak standard English in order to be understood. It is part of their image. We'd thus like to present them as "icons" who by example and as our symbols, show that if they can, so can everyone else," added Professor Koh.

On 13<sup>th</sup> May 2005, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, will officiate at the Speak Good English Movement's 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations at the HDB Hub Auditorium at Toa Payoh. After the ceremony, PM Lee will tour ***Carnival Speak!***, which is being organised by the Movement and its Partners. ***Carnival Speak!*** will be on at the Mall at the HDB Hub at Toa Payoh from Friday, 13 May to Sunday, 15 May 2005. (Highlights of the weekend activities can be found at **Annex B.**)

The Movement and its Partners will be lining up an exciting array of fun-filled programmes and activities on good English for Singaporeans. These range from family-fun events such as the Dramazing Race 2 (on Sunday, 12 June 2005) to reading programmes at the regional and community libraries. (Highlights of these activities can be found at **Annex C.**)

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