

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR HO KAH LEONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION), AT THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY
OF THE SPEAK MANDARIN CAMPAIGN '89 AT THE SINGAPORE
CONFERENCE HALL ON TUESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 1989 AT 3.00 PM

The Speak Mandarin Campaign was first launched by the Hon Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew in September 1979. The campaign has been making good progress and has been given a special boost in October every year. To highlight its importance, the Prime Minister has twice officiated at the launching ceremony. Today, he has again taken time from his busy schedule to launch this year's campaign. We feel greatly honoured and are grateful to the Prime Minister.

Since the campaign was first launched a decade ago, we have spread the message to every corner of Singapore, thanks to the effort and cooperation of all, particularly Members of Parliament, community leaders, clan associations and other Chinese civic organisations. We have provided Mandarin lessons on television, radio, Rediffusion and the telephone and at community centres to help Chinese Singaporeans learn the language. Today, more Chinese Singaporeans can speak Mandarin, and more and more are using Mandarin at public functions and social gatherings, as well as at public counters in both government and private sector organisations.

We are especially gratified to know that the younger generation have mostly switched from dialects to Mandarin already. According to information gathered by the Ministry of Education, 69 per cent of Primary One pupils of Chinese

descent now speak Mandarin at home as against 26 per cent in 1980. By and large, with a decade of effort, the campaign has been a success. However, we should not rest on our laurels. We must continue to pursue the ultimate objective of making Mandarin the common language of the Chinese community in Singapore.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all those who have in one way or another contributed to the success of the campaign and all of you who are present here this afternoon. With your strong support and cooperation, I am confident that the Speak Mandarin Campaign will succeed in realising its ultimate objective.

For online reference
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