

For Immediate Release

“华语 COOL” CELEBRATES WITH MOVIES, MUSIC AND METAPHORS

30 October 2006, Singapore– Using the example of a new film clip by Eric Khoo’s Zhaowei Films, where a classical Tang poem is presented through modern song and dance, the 27th Speak Mandarin Campaign is urging Singaporeans to develop a grasp of the language beyond just its functional use. Targeted at the English speaking post-65 generation, the Campaign is encouraging the audience to gain a better appreciation of the language, Chinese culture and tradition.

"We aim to encourage Chinese Singaporeans to take advantage of not only the day-to-day communication advantages and commercial benefits of the Mandarin language, but also to enjoy a better understanding and appreciation of Chinese heritage and culture," said Kenneth Tan, Chairman of the Promote Mandarin Council.

He added, *"The Campaign aims to bring the perspective of the post-65ers beyond seeing Mandarin as a subject that had to be passed in school examinations and attract their interest to explore the language further. Using a lifestyle-oriented approach, we are extending the theme of "华语 COOL" and working with our partners to engage the audience in their daily lives through movies, music and metaphors."*

MOVIES

In the area of movies, Eric Khoo’s Zhao Wei Films, with director Royston Tan, has produced a short film clip which presents a classical Tang poem in “ge tai” style. This was shown at the launch of the Speak Mandarin Campaign. They will also produce a feature film of the “ge tai” scene in Singapore, as a means to convey aspects of Chinese culture. The music was written by award winning team Eric Ng and Xiao Han of Funkie Monkeys who came forward with this as their contribution in supporting the Speak Mandarin Campaign.

The Speak Mandarin Campaign has also collaborated with Singapore's 5C Films to promote Mandarin in a fun and accessible way, through their widely acclaimed film *Singapore Dreaming* that gives a very engaging and realistic reflection of the challenges Singaporeans face if they have a limited grasp of Mandarin. Written and directed by Colin Goh and Woo Yen Yen, the film brings home the message in a graphic, engaging and entertaining way. Dr Woffles Wu, one of Singapore's top plastic and aesthetic surgeons, is the very active and key driving force behind 5C Films.

MUSIC

Singapore's very successful, newest Internet kid on the block, STOMP, is a key partner for the Speak Mandarin Campaign this year. DPM Wong Kan Seng launched STOMP's latest initiative, MMSing, at the Speak Mandarin Campaign launch today, strongly signaling that Music is one of the campaign's 3 key thrusts.

METAPHORS

To encourage a deeper understanding of the richness of the language, the Speak Mandarin Campaign has tied up with several partners to make learning idioms and metaphors accessible to the target audience.

Building on the success of the weekly "Cool Speak!" in Sunday Times, the newspaper will develop the column further into "Cheng Yu Cool", giving practical tips on the meaning and usage of Chinese idioms. This is key to the campaign's goals of getting Singaporeans to deepen and broaden their grasp and use of Mandarin in their daily lives. Mediacorp's 938Live DJs will promote and talk about "Cheng Yu Cool" in the days following the Sunday features.

Lianhe Zaobao introduced Zaobao's first Comic Book / Multimedia CD-ROM (新加坡啦) at the Speak Mandarin Campaign Official Launch this year. This is a collection of editorial cartoons focusing on social issues and events in contemporary Singapore, commentaries in Chinese and includes English translations of difficult Chinese terms. An important piece of Singapore's Heritage, the Zaobao Editors created this comic to promote Mandarin in a light and fun manner.

Some of the other partners include ComfortDelgro Corporation Limited, Eduplus Language Centre, Golden Village, K Box, Mediacorp TV, Music Net, National Library Board, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Panpac Education Pte Ltd, Singapore Media Academy, the SAF Music & Drama Company and Tong Shui Café. Please visit www.mandarin.org.sg for more details and regular updates.

Annex A – Fact Sheet on Speak Mandarin Campaign

Annex B – List of Partners

Annex C – Partners Profiles and Programmes

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About Speak Mandarin Campaign

Now into its 27th year, the Speak Mandarin Campaign was first launched in 1979 by then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, with the main objective of encouraging Chinese Singaporeans to speak Mandarin as a common language, instead of using dialects. This proved to be very successful, and since the 1990s, the campaign shifted its focus towards encouraging professionals and young people to learn and speak Mandarin.

Apart from promoting Mandarin as an avenue to understanding one's roots and Chinese culture, the campaign also highlights the importance of Mandarin for economic and business competitiveness. A lifestyle-oriented approach – with the tagline '华语 COOL' – is being used to reach out and engage more English speaking Chinese Singaporeans, particularly those in the 'post-65 generation', to speak and use Mandarin in their daily lives. Please visit www.mandarin.org.sg for more information.