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**SPEECH BY GUEST-OF-HONOUR,
DR TEO HO PIN
MAYOR OF NORTH WEST DISTRICT
AT THE NORTH WEST DEBATING
CHAMPIONSHIP 2007 ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2007,
MONDAY, AT STUDIO FOYER @ THE REPUBLIC
CULTURAL CENTRE, REPUBLIC POLYTECHNIC AT
3.00PM**

Councillors of North West CDC,

School Principals, Teachers and Representatives,

Debaters,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Boys and Girls

A very good afternoon. I am delighted to see so many of you present for the North West Debating Championship 2007, jointly organised by North West Community Development Council and the Debate Association. I am sure all of you had enjoyed the keen contest between Methodist Girl's School and Hwa Chong Institution. I trust that all of you had an interesting time taking sides with the issues at hand.

Introduction

2 North West Debating Championship is now in its sixth year running and it aims to create a platform for our youths to give in-depth thoughts to youth issues close to their hearts while developing critical thinking and public speaking skills through active debates. We also believe that debating not only promotes independence of mind, but also tolerance based on respect for contrary opinions. On top of it, we certainly hope that all students have learnt important lessons and made good friends with like-minded peers.

North West Debating Championship 2007

3 This year's North West Debating Championship saw ten secondary schools from the North West district and a total of 50 debaters, vying for the championship. It was heartening to see all debaters and their teachers putting in earnest efforts into their research and strategies. Without doubt, all our debaters are winners for your will to compete in this friendly competition and we hope that this experience in the Debating Championship has provided you positive encouragement to be better debaters.

Motions

4 In the Debating Championship, we debated on issues pertaining to school uniforms in the preliminaries, citizen journalism in the semi-finals and assessment of the education system today. The youth-themed motions were intended to give the students an opportunity to research and relate to issues that

they could identify and relate with. I definitely hope our debaters and supporters have formed a good opinion of how to deal with these matters and further developed the ability to think creatively in the face of adversity and form rational arguments

Engaging Youths

5 Engaging youths is an integral part of the North West CDC's key thrusts of Building an Active Community.

We hope to see more youths coming forward to actively participate in our community initiatives and to also spearhead and organise activities for the community.

6 The North West CDC would like to invite all of you to join the Youth Assembly, the youth wing under the North West CDC. Since its establishment in 2005, the Youth Assembly has organised various community events, including the recent Bus MRT Walk Challenge, a competition similar to the popular Amazing Race; the Green Teen Camp, an environmental

awareness and education camp and the North West CDC Futsal Challenge Cup.

7 These projects not only benefit the community but had allowed our youth volunteers to discover their potentials, to network with fellow peers and to realise the difference that they could make as an individual in the community. So, please step forward and you too, can make a difference.

Conclusion

8 Once again, I would like to congratulate the two finalists Methodist Girls' School and Hwa Chong Institution for reaching the finals and for providing us with a very interesting and informative debate. I would also like to thank West Spring Secondary School for being the host venue during the preliminaries and semi-finals rounds. Not forgetting our adjudicators, guest adjudicators and time-keepers for taking time

off their busy schedules to be with us throughout the two weeks of championship.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all the schools for your support and attendance today. Have a good week ahead.
