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**SPEECH BY MR ANDREW SANDERS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
SINGAPORE SAILING FEDERATION, AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF
SAILSMART PROGRAMME ON FRIDAY, 19 JUNE 2009, AT 9.00AM AT THE
NATIONAL SAILING CENTRE**

Mr. S. Iswaran, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and
Ministry of Education

Mr Low Teo Ping, President, Singapore Sailing Federation

Friends of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

SailSmart is the brain child of our illustrious President – Low Teo Ping. He announced it in a TV interview, I think back in 2006 after the Asian Games. Much to my great surprise and shock when I watched Channel News Asia that night – to hear about this new programme. A huge programme to get as many school going children to experience sailing as possible. But not only experience sailing – also learn something at the same time. A four-day course of sailing and science

and social studies and history. Wow I thought – what a great idea.

Sailing is such a great sport for teaching. It encompasses so many facets. You have to know about the weather – that's meteorology. You have to know about the tides and currents and this is actually astronomy you know because it is linked to the phases of the moon, sun and even Jupiter. You have to know how a sail works or how pulleys and levers work and there are plenty on a boat and this is physics. You have to know how to navigate and use a compass and this is geography. You must understand the fragile nature of our earth and marine environment and this is ecology. And this programme encompasses all these aspects.

This programme fits in well with President Low and SingaporeSailing's long-term objective of giving every Singaporean, every school going child included the opportunity to go sailing. To reach out to new areas of Singapore. To the heart lands. To places where the children may not normally get the regular opportunity to come to the sea side or go for a sail. So President Low said, "Andrew – Make it happen" Yikes! This is a big project.

We were fortunate to recruit Ms Aileen Ho, a passionate sports person and sailor, Masters degree holder and previous polytechnic lecturer. Between President Low, Aileen and myself we nussed out a skeleton for the programme and sort the input from the Ministry of Education.

Aileen found some extremely good educational consultants who were big into

developing new style, look-and-feel science programmes for the schools, National Parks and other government agencies. The company Creative Kids and their directors – Grace and Chin Beng Leng – marine biologists by training, University lecturers, Outward Bound School directors, artists, and parents - they have done it all.

And they are passionate educationalists. We knew these were the people. Just watching Grace with her youngest child one day at the National Sailing Centre, they were studying a cocoon on a tree, and all the intricate details and what was going on inside the cocoon – these are true scientists, fascinated by nature, teaching and learning.

Between Aileen, Grace and Chin Beng the programme grew from an image in President Low's mind, to some rough drawings on a piece of paper, to some unbelievably well produced teaching materials for children. We then set about training building the whole programme, building our base and classroom and the equipment and science experiments.

And most importantly – recruiting. Recruiting and training great instructors for the programme. Young polytechnic and University graduates who have a passion for kids, teaching and the outdoors.

I am extremely grateful for their contribution to the building of this programme and to our current leaders Vincent Lim, Huzaini Bin Ibrahim, and Huang Xiang Ting and previous leaders Roy Tay and Chung Pei Ming for their fantastic and

energetic work to build the operations.

And of course we could not have done it without the dedication of the primary schools and their principals and teachers that walked with us in the development process – Unity Primary, Maris Stella Primary High School (primary section), Chong Zheng Primary, Tao Nan Primary, Junyuan Primary, Northland Primary, St Andrew's Primary and St Hilda's Primary. Thank you very much to your schools – and for lending us your children.

Yes this programme teaches a bit of sailing but foremost it is an outdoor, hands-on learning experience that teaches science, social studies, history, health and nutrition and above all and most importantly how to be safe and sensible by the sea. It is a very important thing to know – how to be safe and sensible by the sea. For any young person growing up, particularly those that grow up in a nation surrounded by water – an island nation.

We have certainly had a very challenging but very fun past 18 months to take a dream and build a reality. Today I am very proud and excited to be standing here at the launch of SailSmart.

Thank you very much.