

Speech by Mrs Ong-Ang Ai Boon, Director of the Association of Banks in Singapore (ABS) at the launch of the “Practical Money Skills for Life” programme sponsored by Visa on 8 Sep 2004 at 10.35 am

Good morning,

Mr Dennis Ng, Visa International,

Dr. Annie Koh, Associate Professor of Finance, Dean of Executive Education,

Associate Dean of the School of Business, and

Associate Professor Dr Benedict Koh

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to be here today to witness the launch of the “Practical Money Skills for Life” programme sponsored by ABS, VISA, and SMU under the MoneySENSE national financial education programme.

Financial education for consumers is a topic close to our hearts in ABS. Since the launch of the MoneySENSE programme in October last year, we have been actively educating and bringing awareness to consumers on specific bank products and services.

However, this programme for the next 2 days aims to bring our financial education efforts to the next level, that is the consumers of the future. It will provide the resources for you, the teachers to guide the students to be financially savvy and disciplined. Students who are being educated with knowledge and skills to earn a good living will now have an added dimension of knowledge and skills to manage their personal finances and plan for their long-term needs after they enter the workforce.

This is important on 2 counts:

Firstly, there is the global economic uncertainties on top of the various security threats. The regional economies including Singapore's are just recovering. The continued and prolonged economic growth that Singapore and Asian countries had in the 80s and early 90s may not be repeated. Hence, the need for all of us to be more financially responsible and to plan for possible uncertainties.

Secondly, the liberalisation of the financial markets over the past few years, has led to greater innovation in the financial services industry, with institutions, like banks, offering more complex and varied products. Consumers now face a myriad of service providers and are exposed to new products and services.

This changing environment means that Singaporeans need to become more self-reliant in their financial affairs and to take on increased responsibility for their own financial decisions.

ABS would like to acknowledge Visa's contribution in bringing this programme to Singapore, a programme which they have successfully implemented in US and Canada for the students there. Also our appreciation to SMU for adopting it.

As an industry, the Association is glad to support this important MoneySENSE initiative....

It leaves me now to wish you a fruitful and enjoyable programme. Thank you.