

**EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY**  
**PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**Welcome Remarks by Mrs Lim Hwee Hua, Minister of State for Finance and Transport, at the Launch of the *MoneySENSE Family Outreach* at Parco Bugis Junction on Saturday, 13 November 2004 at 1pm**

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

And a very good afternoon to the parents and children present today.

### **Introduction**

I am very happy to be here today to launch the MoneySENSE Family Outreach.

2 Financial education is a matter close to my heart. I first broached the issue in Parliament in May 2000, asking whether Government should play a coordinating role in driving financial education efforts in Singapore. I was very glad when Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong launched the MoneySENSE national financial education programme in October 2003.

3 It has been a year since the launch of the MoneySENSE programme. I am glad to note that much progress has been made.

Several of the Community Development Councils (CDCs) have worked closely with MoneySENSE and industry partners to bring financial education to the community. In fact, many of the representatives from the financial associations present today have personally volunteered their time and expertise to deliver free talks at community clubs all over Singapore. In my own constituency, we held a MoneySENSE @ SouthEast programme in May this year, where we brought a series of interactive skits and money management workshops to the residents in the South East district.

4 Over the past one year, MoneySENSE has also produced a wide range of financial education guides for consumers. If you flip through the Sunday newspapers, you will find a regular fortnightly column providing practical tips on basic money management, financial planning and investments. Or if you read your CDC newsletter or browse through consumer magazines, you will also come across MoneySENSE articles contributed by associations such as the Consumers' Association of Singapore (CASE) and the Life Insurance Association (LIA).

5 However, the bottomline is still this: that Singaporeans must recognize the importance of being financially literate. They have to be proactive in getting their personal finances in order and take responsibility for their financial decisions. In this regard, it is important that we reach out to families in our financial education efforts, as good money management habits start from the home.

6 Whether we realize it or not, every financial decision we make has longer-term financial implications. These include decisions such as how much we spend on a day-to-day basis or how much we borrow for big-ticket items like our homes and cars. Other decisions may require longer-term planning, such as providing for our children's education, saving for old age, buying an investment product or ensuring adequate insurance coverage for our family's medical and protection needs.

7 Unfortunately, many Singaporeans do not make a conscious effort to discuss these financial decisions as a family or make plans for their family's finances in a structured manner. Some families know that they should have a better grip of their finances, but they do not know where to start. Understandably, families may feel confused by the wide array of financial services and products being offered in the marketplace. I believe that if families had the tools and know-how, they would be in a better position to make wise personal choices about their finances.

8 It is for this reason that MoneySENSE and its industry partners are offering a whole host of practical, yet fun-filled programmes as part of the MoneySENSE Family Outreach today. Let me elaborate on some of these initiatives.

9 First, the Association of Banks in Singapore (ABS) and its member banks – ABN AMRO, Citibank, DBS Bank, HSBC, Maybank, OCBC Bank, Standard Chartered Bank and United Overseas Bank –

have developed a comic book that takes a light-hearted look at some of the common mistakes Singaporeans make when dealing with money matters. While I found many of the scenarios in the comic book hilarious, I must say they also carry a familiar ring. For example, many of us are guilty of purchasing financial products such as insurance policies, without a good understanding of what the product covers. The tips at the end of the comic book can also serve as useful reminders of how we can be more “moneysensible”.

10 Second, the Insurance and Financial Practitioners Association of Singapore (IFPAS) and the Life Insurance Association (LIA) have jointly produced a guide on how families can draw up a financial plan. I am sure you will be able to empathize with many of the financial dilemmas faced by the Lim Family featured in the guide. I am sure you will find the financial planning tools and tips contained in the guide useful as you embark on your own journey to plan for a more secure financial future for your family.

11 I must applaud the financial associations for making special efforts to ensure that the programmes organized as part of today’s MoneySENSE Family Outreach are fun and engaging for both the young and old. Besides the Children’s Art Contest which has just concluded, I understand that the Association of Financial Advisers (AFA), the Financial Planning Association of Singapore (FPAS) and the Investment Management Association of Singapore (IMAS) have also come together to organize a MoneySENSE Family Challenge to identify a “MoneySENSE Family” – one who has good money

management habits and has taken steps to plan for their family's current and future financial needs.

12 These are all laudable efforts in ensuring that financial education is made more accessible to families. I would like to urge the industry associations to continue to support MoneySENSE in bringing financial education to as many Singaporeans as possible. I hope that all of you will pick up your free copy of the comic book and financial planning guide, and start practising better money management habits to secure a better financial future for your family today.

13 I am sure you are all anxiously awaiting the unveiling of the two guides. Let me now conclude by wishing all of you an enjoyable afternoon ahead.

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