Speech by Prof Lim Mong King, Deputy President, Nanyang Technological University, at the finale of the NTU-JC-HSA Challenge, February 18, 2005

Dr Tan Chor Hiang, Chief Executive Officer, Health Sciences Authority, Principals, Teachers, Students, and Distinguished Guests.

First, let me extend a very warm welcome to you all to the Finale of the NTU-JC-HSA Challenge 2005. The Challenge, organised jointly by Nanyang Technological University, Health Sciences Authority and Mensa Singapore, aims to encourage A-level students to use information technology to develop innovative and creative solutions to practical problems in the life sciences. In line with the nation’s effort to build a knowledge-based economy, the Challenge is crafted to encourage active learning through problem solving and team work. In addition, the Challenge aims to promote creative ideas on any possible applications of IT on various science and technology issues.

There are altogether four awards for the participating teams to compete for.

1. Invitrogen-McGraw Hill Best Innovation Award
2. Biomed-McGraw Hill Best Overall Performance Award
3. Micron-McGraw Hill Best Presentation Award
4. Mensa Best Creativity Award

The hurdles that needed to be overcome in order to achieve the award certainly made our participants worked very hard during the December / January break.

A five-day residential programme on the NTU Campus was held immediately after the launch of the Challenge in November last year. Throughout the five days in NTU Campus, student participants were exposed to many aspects of life sciences, research and development through lectures and site visits. Participants were given the opportunities to interact with professors from NTU School of Biological Sciences, and experience first-hand the state-of-the-art research facilities available in the School. Being young and curious, I am sure the participants have done their best to pick the brains of our professors from the School of Biological Sciences, excited by their cutting-edge research work in Life Sciences. They had also the chance to interact with scientists from Health Sciences Authority, and external research institutes such as Bioinformatics Institute. Site visits to the Health Sciences Authority, Novartis Institute for Tropical Diseases and Waseda-Olympus Bioscience Research Institute also enhance the participants' understanding on the applications of life sciences in different fields.

As expected, the participants did encounter technical problems. Despite these difficulties, the participants have been very upbeat and enthusiastic about the Challenge.
They have achieved the goal of experiencing research and innovation in advanced technology. Today, we will see the end results of their innovative ideas.

As this Challenge is coming to an end, we would like to encourage the Challenge participants to continue their interest in Life Sciences and to arouse the interests of their schoolmates who have not participated in the Challenge.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dr Tan Chor Hiang for gracing this occasion. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the organising and scientific committees. We must also thank the Educational Technology Division of MOE, Micron, Biomed Diagnostics, Invitrogen Singapore, Mensa-NTU Branch, Practical Mediscience, BioLaboratories, Roche Diagnostics Asia Pacific, BioGEN, Bioinformatics Institute, SPD Scientific and McGraw-Hill Education for their generous support and sponsorship. With good support, we look forward to more exciting events in future NTU-JC Challenges.

Thank you.