Speech by Senior Minister of State for Defence, Mr Heng Chee How, for BrainHack 2022

1.   Hello everyone.

2.   Welcome to BrainHack 2022.

3.   I am very happy to be back here. BrainHack, organised by Singapore's Defence Science and Technology Agency, has been providing students a unique, hands-on experience to dive into the world of digital technology. This virtual space that we are in transcends location, time zones, and COVID-19 restrictions, and it allows the curation of the best possible programmes for experiential learning. It is heartening to know that despite COVID-19, BrainHack has been garnering increased interest over the years, with a steady growth in the number of participants up from 1,500 in 2019, to close to 4,000 last year.

4.   The COVID-19 pandemic and the recent global and local developments have underscored the importance of digital technology and its role in national defence and security. The current Russia-Ukraine conflict is a case in point. We can expect this increased use of misinformation and cyber in future warfare. Tech companies like Meta and SpaceX have also announced their focus on the metaverse, cyber defence and counter-jamming technologies, among other digital domains.

5.   For MINDEF, we recently announced the creation of the SAF's fourth service, the Digital and Intelligence Service, which we call the DI Service. Our Defence Technology Community will be working with the DI Service to build up the SAF's capabilities to address emerging threats in the digital domain. We have also invested in infrastructure over the years, such as the Digital Factory to allow us to build, test, and scale digital solutions securely. Over the past two years, the Digital Factory has developed a suite of products, one of which is the Soldier Health mobile application. That application aims to provide essential digital services and personalised medical information at MINDEF medical centres. DSTA also recently inked new collaborations to co-develop digital

solutions with industry partners including Airbus and Boeing to use data analytics to reduce maintenance cost and to increase the readiness of our aircraft.

6.   BrainHack 2022 will continue to transport you into the world of latest digital technologies through hackathons, workshops, competitions, and virtual tech showcases. I hope that your participation in these activities will help you see your potential and to fuel your passion in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, application development, and other emerging fields. Perhaps, it may also inspire you to join our Defence Technology Community.

7.   Last but not least, I thank the participating schools, our partners, and the organising team for making BrainHack 2022 possible and successful. I wish all of you, our participants, a fruitful and engaging experience.

8.   Thank you.

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