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**WELCOME ADDRESS BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR HO PENG KEE
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR LAW AND HOME AFFAIRS AND
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL) AT THE SEMINAR
ON NETWORKING YOUTH SERVICES ON SATURDAY, 25 NOVEMBER
1995 9.00AM, CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS, ANGLO-CHINESE
SCHOOL (INDEPENDENT) 121, DOVER ROAD**

Mr Abdullah Tarmugi

Acting Minister for Community Development
Senior Minister of State for Home Affairs
and Chairman of the IMC
(Inter-Ministry Committee on Dysfunctional Families,
Juvenile Delinquency and Drug Abuse)

Friends

Good morning and welcome to this Seminar on Networking Youth Services. The issue of delinquent youth and wayward youth who get into trouble with the law has been in the news. Statistics show that the overall crime rate in Singapore has come down over the past few years. However, that for juvenile crimes has bucked the trend and has gone up instead.

2 It is in this context that the Prime Minister set up the Inter-Ministry Committee on Dysfunctional Families, Juvenile Delinquency and Drug Abuse, of IMC, in October last year to study the issues and recommend solutions. The IMC report has

been finalized and was released a few days ago. Indeed, we are grateful to have with us today the Chairman himself, Mr Abdullah Tarmugi, as our Guest-of-Honour.

3 One of the recommendations of the IMC is for enhanced networking amongst the various agencies dealing with delinquent youth. It is with this in mind that the Ministry of Community Development, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the National Council of Social Service and the National Youth Council have come together to co-organise this seminar on “Networking Youth Services”. We hope this Seminar will act as a catalyst to strengthen our collective resolve and enhance areas of collaboration to deal effectively with some of the problems among our youth.

4 We have organised this seminar with two main objectives in mind:

a. Firstly, to foster greater networking amongst the schools, the Police, youth service and community agencies on preventive as well as remedial youth programmes; and

b. Secondly, to examine the scope and options for improving the preventive and remedial programmes for youths.

5 I am glad to note that the response to this Seminar has been overwhelming. More than 450 participants from a wide variety of backgrounds have signed up. The signal we send out today is a strong one. It is a collective message from all of us - that everyone will do a part in reaching out to troubled Singapore youths. When the Ministries of Community Development, Education and Home Affairs, Police, Schools, NCSS, NYC, VWOs, grassroot organizations, self-help, religious and professional groups such as the Law Society of Singapore and concerned Singaporeans join hands in a concerted effort, I am sure there will be progress made.

6 On behalf of the co-organising agencies, I wish to express appreciation to the three speakers for sharing with us the insights on juvenile delinquency and aspects of youth services which will set the tone of our discussions, the Law Society and Temasek Polytechnic for presenting their new CD-ROM on Youth & Crime, the workshop chairpersons for facilitating the workshop discussions and all those who have helped to make this seminar possible.

7 The workshops for this seminar are grouped by geographical location. I hope that the contacts made today will help participants in their networking efforts in the future. This seminar is not an end in itself. I hope that in addition to facilitating greater networking amongst you, this seminar will also produce new and innovative ideas

which will help us to improve the spectrum of support services for youth, and reduce the numbers who fall by the wayside.

8 I wish you all a fruitful and enjoyable seminar.