

**SPEECH BY MR AMRIN AMIN,
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS,
AT THE CNB WORKPLAN SEMINAR 2017
ON 25 APRIL 2017, 9.30AM AT POLICE CANTONMENT COMPLEX
AUDITORIUM**

Mr Ng Ser Song, Director CNB
CNB officers
Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1. I am pleased to join you this morning at the CNB Workplan Seminar 2017.
2. CNB has achieved much in 2016.
3. You have worked very hard and seen successes in the areas of preventive drug education, enforcement, international engagement and advocacy.
4. Thank you for your contributions and efforts in keeping Singapore's drug situation under control.

Preventive drug education

5. Preventive drug education, or PDE, remains at the forefront of our strategy in this fight against drugs.
6. CNB has worked hard in rolling out various PDE initiatives.
7. CNB has also been reaching out to partners such as teachers, parents and NS Commanders.
8. CNB produced toolkits to equip them with knowledge on drugs so they can better engage their children and their NSmen to influence and help them stay away from drugs. They are important influencers.
9. On social media, CNB has enhanced its presence across social media platforms from Facebook, Instagram to YouTube. Social media is an important platform in this new media world.
10. To spread the anti-drug message, CNB has worked with influential youths. Taufik hits the right notes with "High on Love". Irfan Fandi scores among the young with his messages on staying drug free.

Drug enforcement

11. CNB has also done a very good job in enforcement.
12. CNB dismantled 23 drug trafficking syndicates in 2016.
13. But the fight against drugs has shifted to a new battleground – the internet.
14. There are people who hide behind the internet's anonymity for their drug trade.
15. On this front, CNB has stepped up efforts to detect and disrupt online drug trade.
In 2016, there were 201 persons arrested for buying drugs and drug paraphernalia online, compared to just 30 in 2015.
16. We should never let up on our efforts to apprehend those who seek to evade the long arm of the law.
17. Thank you, CNB officers for your sacrifices and hard work in keeping Singapore's drug situation under control.
18. Thank you to your families too, for putting up with your long hours at work. Your families have sacrificed. You have given up family time. To save lives. To keep this country drug-free and we have been successful on this count.

International engagement and local advocacy

19. CNB's work is not just limited within Singapore's borders. It has international and regional dimensions. And CNB has also done well in these areas.
20. CNB worked with its regional counterparts to stem the supply of drugs overseas.
21. Last year we participated actively at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS), where we stood up for our vision of a drug-free society.
22. At the 5th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters which Singapore hosted, we took a clear and firm stance against drugs. Together with our ASEAN neighbours, we delivered a joint statement at the Meeting to reaffirm our vision for a Drug-Free ASEAN.

23. However we must press on with our efforts.
We have to continually engage the international community to ensure that our national interest to maintain a zero-tolerance stand on drugs will not be compromised.

Challenges

24. We have our work cut out for us,
we face many challenges.
25. The Singapore population is ageing
Our manpower supply will be increasingly constrained.
26. Public expectations are rising.
The public wants us to be more efficient,
to respond to their queries quickly.

Shifting global trends

27. Your work is made more difficult by the global drug trends.
28. Many countries are at risk of liberalising their position on the drug problem.
Under pressure from a worsening drug problem in their societies,
some governments are moving towards a harm reduction rather than harm prevention approach which is the position we are taking in Singapore.
This is a dangerous slippery slope.
29. Many countries are legalising cannabis.
30. Some parties are trumpeting the so-called "medicinal use" of cannabis.
They glamourise drug use,
But they do not talk about the harms of drugs.

Youth drug abusers

31. Locally, we are seeing an increase in the number of young drug abusers arrested.
Close to two-thirds of all new abusers arrested were below 30 years old.
32. Youths are displaying more liberal attitudes towards drugs.
33. From our interviews with inmates,
former drug offenders and youths.
34. It is clear that the myth that cannabis is harmless
has seeped into the minds of some of our youths.
35. The false messages on drugs are on the internet and are easily accessible to youths.

36. If we are not careful,
we are potentially looking at a new generation of drug abusers.

Transformation is a necessity

37. The challenges are real.
And CNB needs to ready itself for the future.
38. CNB recognises this
and has embarked on a transformative journey
to stay ahead of the curve in the fight against drugs.
39. I will talk about four priorities
- Social media
 - Active citizenry
 - Technology
 - Joint operations

Using Social Media to Reach Out to the Youths

40. First, on social media. We need to further up our game to counter the narrative that drugs are acceptable
41. The NCADA survey showed that youths preferred receiving information on preventive drug education through social media.
42. But social media is a double-edged sword
Negative online influences can easily corrode the minds of our young.
43. We have produced several online videos and advertisements to dispel myths on cannabis,
but we need to know who
and what we are up against.
44. Blitzy ads selling false info.
45. Evocative statements spreading lies about drugs. How this is portrayed to be cool.
46. Our young people are exposed to these.
We have to make sure our videos and ads
present the real truths.
47. And we are revamping our social media outreach to better resonate with and engage youths,
empower them with information on the harms of drugs
and send a clear message that a drug free life is indeed cool.
Messages have to be in sync with this generation.
48. The nature of social media is that it is ever changing

so we need to keep up with the times and latest trends.
We need to use humour, wit,
use youth lingo
present information in digestible format,
the way our young are used to,
to send youths the serious and hard messages,
to empower them to lead a drug-free lifestyle.

49. Bottom line, life is precious,
we have to live life to the fullest.

Empowering and creation of an active citizenry

50. Second is active citizenry,
to empower our citizens
to spread the anti-drug advocacy
to compete with the negative voices online.
51. This war cannot be won by CNB alone.
52. We need a united network of organisations
to endorse and promote Singapore's anti-drug stance.
53. Advocacy is our new cornerstone in PDE.

Launch of "United Against Drugs" Coalition

54. I am encouraged that CNB and NCADA
have taken the lead to form a "United Against Drugs" Coalition.
Bringing together the different organisations
in the anti-drug ecosystem to support the drug-free cause.
55. Today, we launch this new initiative to raise awareness of drug abuse
in our society
and rally support from different organisations
to advocate for a drug-free Singapore.
56. We want to expand our reach to even more organisations to join this platform.
57. I want to take this opportunity to welcome KFC, PastaMania, Gong Cha, Clarke Quay, Central Perk café, Tenderfresh, SingPost, Fat Papa's Burger, "I am" café and Reebonz.
58. They are well-known names and brands,
that youths are familiar with.
They are brands who understand the importance of youths leading drug-free lifestyles.
59. I would also like to thank our traditional partners MINDEF, MOE, MSF, self-help organisations, and schools for their continued support.

60. We hope more organisations like them
Will join us to promote this anti-drug cause

Anti-drug Advocacy Network

61. We also want to unite individuals who are passionate about keeping Singapore drug-free.
62. We want to tap on the voices of friends, colleagues and mentors to promote a drug-free lifestyle. Together, we can be louder than those voices who are asking for a liberalisation of drug policies.
63. We are thankful that we have advocates like Dr Roger Ho and Dr Melvyn Zhang.
64. They have both contributed to our advocacy efforts by developing a PDE mobile app with their medical students, to educate youths on the harms of drugs.
65. We hope for more passionate individuals like them to join us, and share their skills and expertise to promote a drug-free lifestyle.

Harnessing the power of technology

66. Third, to harness the power of technology.
67. CNB is transforming itself through technology.
68. CNB's unified Investigation and Case Management System is an excellent example. It allows officers the flexibility to share information digitally and to collaborate with external agencies to process cases in a timely and efficient manner.
69. We need to automate even more functions
To reduce the amount of manual tasks
So that our officers can better focus on their core work.

Integrating the Home Team's operations

70. Next, we need to better integrate Home Team's operations.
71. The operations centres of the different Home Team Departments will be co-located together as one Home Team Operations Centre starting later this year. This will enhance the way we communicate and share information across the Home Team departments.

72. It will allow for better coordination of joint responses to incidents.
It will enable the Home Team departments to respond and work better together.
73. These are just some examples of CNB's transformative initiatives in the four priority areas
which have started or are in the pipeline.

Conclusion

74. To conclude, let us work closely together
to weed out drug abuse in our society
This fight is not going to be easy.
It will be a long and hard process.
75. But I can be confident that
with the dedication, professionalism, and resourcefulness of CNB and its
officers, supported by its partners and the community,
that we will be able to achieve success.
76. I wish all of you a fruitful workplan seminar.
77. Thank you.