

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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Singapore 16-3/82/03/24
30 MAR 1982

Acc No. NARC
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SPEECH BY MR CHAN CHEE SENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (TRADE AND INDUSTRY), AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR JALAN BESAR, AT THE OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF THE TOY SAFETY AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE (TSAS) AT SHANGRI-LA HOTEL ON 24 MARCH '82 AT 12.00 NOON

I have great pleasure in officially inaugurating the Toy Safety Authority of Singapore (TSAS). For some years now CASE has been concerned with the safety of toys. This has culminated in the Association forming a self-regulatory body to deal with toy safety in Singapore. I find it indeed most commendable and congratulate the organisations that have come together to assist CASE.

The main function of TSAS will be to promote and regulate the highest standard of safety in the import, export, manufacture and retail of children's toys and playthings. It will not be an easy task. TSAS will have to work out its programmes in detail to ensure effectiveness. The best check would be at source.

This would depend on a high responsibility displayed by importers, exporters, manufacturers and retailers of children's toys and playthings. The product must give consumers a high degree of safety against danger, harm and injury. Therefore, the products must comply with the Singapore Toy Safety Code. This can be achieved by proper supervision when importing, exporting, manufacturing and retailing. In addition, other preventive and corrective measures must be taken.

The safety of our children at play cannot be over emphasised. So, the role of TSAS in promoting toy safety in Singapore must be complemented by the support of parents and adults. Generally, they are the ones who buy toys for children. Their selection of safe toys is therefore of paramount importance. In addition, their feedback to TSAS on unsafe toys available in the market will be of great benefit to the work of TSAS. This will enable TSAS to take action to ensure consumer protection.

In order to obtain active participation of parents and adults in the selection and feedback processes, TSAS will have to mount an education and information programme. This programme can also be for older children who select and buy toys for themselves. Those who buy toys have a responsibility to themselves as well as to those who play with these toys. They must therefore choose wisely by regarding themselves as testers, demanding only for safe toys and taking positive action against the unsafe ones to rid the market of hazards to life and limb. As consumers, we must make greater demands for value-for-money in products and services. We must demand for a reasonable balance between price and quality. Products have to live up to our expectations about their functions, durability and reliability. Products whilst performing as we expect them to must not have apparent or hidden dangers. Life and limb issues are at stake and we do not want to run the risk of being injured or harmed. We must therefore take the necessary precautions.

Parental responsibility is also reflected in the supervision given whilst children are at play. The supervision varies with the age of children. Usually, the older children are, the less they need supervision. It has been proven that the lack of supervision is contributory to the many accidents of children at play. Parents must therefore ensure adequate supervision. This may at times be burdensome but is surely less painful than the hurt an accident can cause innocent children.

In conclusion, I would like to assure Government's support of TSAS objectives to attain a high safety standard in the toy industry in Singapore. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". While we do not want Jack to be dull, we also do not want him harmed.