

Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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**SPEECH BY MR CHIN HARN TONG, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, AT THE LAUNCHING OF
THE ROAD SAFETY WORKBOOK CONTEST
AT THE REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE, ORANGE GROVE ROAD
ON SATURDAY 23 FEBRUARY 1980 AT 11.00 AM**

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Today's function is to launch the Road Safety Workbook contest for primary four pupils. The National Safety Council of Singapore are to be congratulated for their tireless efforts at promoting road safety awareness among our population, especially our younger ones. Road safety education, such as this contest which we have here today, is an effective way of teaching our school children the proper way to use our roads.

Road safety education has contributed significantly towards reducing our road accident toll. 1979 saw a marked decrease in the number of fatal and serious injury accidents. Compared to 1978, the number of road fatalities dropped by 16 per cent to 234 deaths last year. Over the same period, the number of seriously injured accident victims fell dramatically by 42 per cent to 1,655 casualties. There is little doubt that the vigorous educational programmes conducted by the various organisations, including the Traffic Police, in conjunction with the National Safety Council, have helped to contribute to this improvement in our accident situation.

Despite the general improvement in serious road accidents, 14 pedestrians under 14 years of age were killed last year, compared to 12 in 1978. From January to 21 February this year already four children below 14 years of age were killed in road accidents. The situation as regards serious injury accidents is much better - 136 casualties in 1979 as compared with 230 in 1978. However, slight injury victims went up from 740 in 1978 to 762 in 1979. All these figures stress the need for a continual and intense commitment to educate our children on road safety.

I understand that fervent efforts are being maintained to educate all categories of road users. For school children, the Traffic Police, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, has already begun a series of road safety exhibition at selected schools. Altogether nine secondary schools in various parts of our island have been selected as exhibition centres. Students from the nearby schools will visit these exhibitions. National Police Cadet Corps members have also been mobilised to help their younger schoolmates to use the pedestrian crossings. Since 1977, mini traffic games have been held in more than 170 primary schools in Singapore and this practice will continue this year.

By the middle of this year, the Traffic Education Park in the East Coast Park will be ready. The Park will be built on a landscaped four-hectare site between Big Splash and the Parkland Golf Driving Range. When completed, the Traffic Police and the Ministry of Education will jointly organise traffic games there for our primary school children. The children will be able to drive miniature cars and cycle over 1.6 km of concrete roads with simulated traffic conditions, including traffic signs and signals. These facilities will give our children the opportunity to learn the rudiments of road safety amidst pleasant and congenial surroundings. There are also plans to organise annual traffic games competitions for our primary schools. This project, costing over \$ $\frac{3}{4}$ million, is the result of the joint efforts of the Singapore Police Force, Parks and Recreation Department, PWD, National Safety Council and the Ministry of Education.

With all these efforts, it is hoped that traffic accidents in general, and among school students in particular, will continue on its downward trend this year.