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SPEECH BY DR TAN ENG LIANG, CHAIRMAN, SINGAPORE SPORTS COUNCIL AT THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE SSC/A & W ATHLETICS TRAINING SCHEME ON WEDNESDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 1983 AT 6.00 PM AT THE NATIONAL STADIUM THEATRETTE

Athletics or rather, track and field is perhaps the most well known of all the sports in the world. There are many people who consider it to be synonymous with the Olympic Games. It is a traditional event in large international sports' meets.

In the last SEA Games, Singapore's track and field athletes had put up a rather dismal show compared to the other participating countries. Traditionally, Singapore had been a force to be reckoned with in the area of track and field in this region. Many of us here can recall former champions like C Kunalan, Nor Azhar, Glory Barnabas, Yeo Kian Chye, Chee Swee Lee, Heather Merican and many others, who had put up very formidable challenges to some of Asian's top athletes. Presently, it seems that our youngsters are not up to the mark and in certain events (eg. high jump and some women's events), the talent of some of these former athletes still goes unchallenged.

This is a sad situation. Fortunately, this situation is not a reflection of the lack of talent in track and field. If we take a look at the National

Schools Track and Field Championships, we can certainly find that there have been and are a number of promising and quality athletes. Some here might know school stars like Chia Wen Chien, Richard Seow, Leong Wai Hong, Kan Shook Wah, Sandra Deans and Jennifer Moss (to name a few), who have shown potential, but did not seem to have gone any further than school sports. One cannot but wonder where have they all gone? Some of these potentials have actually given up athletics because of career and others, because of a lack of chance to undergo effective, proper training. The lack of opportunity to train may be due to the expensive nature of the sport. Track and field with its many different events makes it one of the more expensive sports to fund.

It has been difficult to convince commercial organisations to support Athletics Training Scheme as it is costly. Finally, A & W Singapore decided to take up the challenge to support such a training scheme. Today, we witness the launching of a promising programme that will help our track and field participants to upgrade their performance in time for the 13th SEA Games in Brunei in 1985. A & W's comprehensive and farsighted thinking and their belief in Singapore's Track and Field potential, has stepped forward with a donation of \$330,000 for this whole scheme over three years.

To the athletes who would be selected for the scheme, I would like to offer some advice. It will take more than just funds, facilities, and coaching to help you make it to the top. In the final analysis, the push and effort, the will to succeed, the determination to keep going when training is tough and the ability to humbly take victories and defeats, can only come from yourself. The qualities of a good athlete are hardwork, dedication, perseverance and humility. Without these qualities, an athlete is like a poor quality gemstone, though placed in the hands of the best craftsman, it will not be able to give off the same brilliance and lustre of a gem like "The Star of Africa".

Finally, I would like to thank A & W Singapore for their generous sponsorship of this scheme.