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**SPEECH BY DR TAY ENG SOON, MINISTER OF STATE (EDUCATION),
AT THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON "THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN THE
PREVENTION OF GLUE-SNIFFING AND INHALANT ABUSE"
AT THE SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC AUDITORIUM
ON SATURDAY, 4 JUNE 1988 AT 9.30 AM**

In the middle and late 1970s, our main drug problem came from heroin, a very dangerous hard drug which leads to the slow deterioration of body and mind with the victim becoming a vegetable in due course.

A new menace has now appeared on the scene - glue-sniffing or inhalant abuse. People tend to think that glue-sniffing is less dangerous than hard drug abuse because glues are common everyday items. This is a grievous error. Glue-sniffing is more dangerous for two reasons.

First, glue-sniffing is a killer. It actually kills the victim. It kills in two ways. It destroys certain organs in the body such as the kidney, the liver and the brain. Failure of these organs, of course, leads to a painful death. But even before it does it, glue-sniffing can cause temporary insanity. In such a fit, the victim is likely to leap off the balcony of a flat, run across the road into an on-coming car or drown himself by jumping into a monsoon drain or the sea.

The second reason why glue-sniffing is dangerous is because glues are so easily available. They are important commercial products and cannot be banned like heroin or ganja. Their ready access and low cost makes it

secure an attractive salary after your national service. You will also be more versatile in your Civil Defence roles in repair and reconstruction work in addition to your other Civil Defence skills such as rendering first aid, fighting fires and carrying out simple rescue during emergency operations. As such, your skills in construction trade and in Civil Defence techniques will go a long way in contributing to the welfare of your fellow citizens and our nation as a whole.

I am particularly glad to note the further integration of recruit training between the SFS and the SCDF. The two Forces have joined hands to train their recruits under a common training syllabus during the Basic Para-Military Training. After this basic training, SFS will then train their recruits further in their own specialisation of fire-fighting while the CD recruits will go on to construction skills training. The joint training provides yet another excellent avenue to strive towards the common goal of both the Forces by promoting greater cooperation and better understanding among this batch of recruits and the training staff concerned. It will also serve to maximise the use of manpower resources and training facilities of both services.

In fact, such joint venture between the two Forces has already been introduced in many other areas such as seminars and exercises. It is only the beginning of a long-term goal to collaborate and pool resources and skills in three areas, namely, training, logistics and community relations. An integration of efforts in these areas will significantly enhance both Forces' capability to undertake rescue missions and will foster the sharing of experience, resources and strength between them. I am certain that no effort will be spared by both the SCDF and the SFS to continue to promote and strengthen their ties in order to achieve this common goal for their mutual benefit.

On this note let me once again congratulate you on your successful completion of your courses. I am confident that with your proper attitude, hard work and determination, each one of you can succeed in your future training. I strongly encourage you to continue your positive attitude of desiring to learn while at the same time strengthening cooperation and team work among your fellow trainees. I wish you all the best in your future endeavour.

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