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SPEECH BY MR ABDUL HAMID ABDULLAH CHAIRMAN OF AMP GROUP ON SATURDAY 22 JULY 2017 AT 9.15 AM AT THE INTER-AGENCY AFTERCARE GROUP YOUTH FORUM 2017

Distinguished guests

ACG Partners,

Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning.

1. Thank you for joining us here today at our annual Inter-Agency Aftercare Group Youth Forum.
2. The Inter-Agency Aftercare Group, or ACG, comprising the Association of Muslim Professionals, (AMP), Yayasan MENDAKI, Taman Bacaan, Khadijah Mosque and Mr Rhazaly Noentil, was established to provide support to the families of detainees since 2002.
3. Over the years, the ACG has worked closely with various community stakeholders, including engaging our youths, to strengthen the community's resilience and preparedness against the threat of radicalism. We do this by engaging families through

ACG's support programmes as well as organising youth forums to raise awareness on the current terrorist threat landscape. The idea behind these initiatives is to ensure that we are all equipped to maintain social cohesion and harmony should a crisis occur in Singapore.

4. Many of us used to think that a terrorist attack is unlikely to happen in Singapore. But now, it's no longer a question of **whether** it will happen, rather **when** it will happen. We have to prepare ourselves, at all levels of the society, to be able to respond with resolution and stand united as a community, when a terrorist attack strikes.
5. The Home Team and our national agencies have ramped up their efforts to keep Singapore safe and secure. However, this responsibility should not be left solely to them. We too have a part to play. Every single one of us should play our role in keeping our country safe from terrorist attacks or our citizens from being influenced by radical ideologies, most often under the guise of religion.
6. This can be done simply by being aware and alert of your surroundings and people around you. If you suspect a friend or a family member might have been radicalised or is starting to show signs of embracing extreme ideology, you should inform the authorities. That certainly is a dilemma and a big decision to make. None of us wants our family or friend to get into trouble. But, it is a decision that we need to take to protect our home and also to save our family and friends from losing his or her life.
7. Recent arrests of young individuals under the Internal Security Act have shown that these arrests could have been avoided had their family members or friends informed the authorities sooner. Instead of detention, they could have received early counselling that could have helped them. We need to be vigilant, and look out for signs where our loved ones may need help if they have been influenced by terrorist ideologies.
8. At the same time, we too need to be cognizant of our own exposure to ideas perpetuated by extremists that pervade the Internet. The easy access to information on the online sphere means that we need to be discerning when deciding whether or not the information is credible and useful. It is also important not to limit yourselves to

acquiring information from the internet. Speaking to others more knowledgeable than you, and interacting with people who may not share the same views as you are equally important, so that you can gain a balanced perspective. Seek knowledge from the right channels and use that knowledge to educate others. Only when armed with a critical thinking mindset, will you be able to better discern right from wrong.

9. From today's Forum, you will be able to hear from experts in the various fields about the terrorist threat landscape and its impact in Singapore and around the world, some psychological perspectives on radicalisation in the digital era, as well as the relation between religion and nation building and how it impacts us as a pluralistic society. Importantly, you will also learn how you can play a part in ensuring that we remain cohesive and resilient as a community and society. With the knowledge that you gain today, I hope that you will use it to share it with your friends and family members and encourage them to also play a part in countering radical ideology and keep us safe from the threat of terrorism.
10. Last but not least, I would like to urge you to actively participate in the Forum and benefit from the information and discussions that we have planned for you today.
11. Thank you.

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