SPEECH BY CHAIRMAN OF ACG DR MD BADRUN NAFIS SAION AT THE INTER-AGENCY AFTERCARE GROUP YOUTH FORUM 2019 – #YOUTH-NIFIED: GUARDING AGAINST RADICALISM IN THE DIGITAL ERA ON SATURDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 8.45AM AT REPUBLIC POLYTECHNIC

Distinguished guests
ACG Leaders
Principals & Chief Executive Officers
Ladies and gentlemen
Good morning.

1.   Thank you for joining us here today on a Saturday for our annual Inter-Agency Aftercare Group or ACG Youth Forum. I am heartened to know that many of you here want to play a part in fostering social resilience and social cohesion.

INTRODUCTION ON ACG

2.   The ACG is a collaboration between AMP, Yayasan MENDAKI, Taman Bacaan and Khadijah Mosque. The ACG is aimed at providing support to the families of those detained for terrorism-related activities. Set up 17 years ago in 2002, the ACG also organises annual youth forums like the one we are here for today to empower youths to play a more active role in guarding against terror and radicalism.

THE THREAT OF TERRORISM AND THE INTERNET

3.   The threat of terrorism is one that is real. It's no longer a matter of 'if', but 'when'. The threat does not necessarily have to come from overseas. In fact, we have seen many of our fellow Singaporeans get swayed by dangerous materials they find online and in turn, become a threat to themselves and our country. Some are prepared to join the conflict overseas, and if they are unable to, they threaten to commit violence within Singapore, while others help terrorists to advance their cause by financing their activities.

4.   Often, they are misguided by the information they seek online, and do not take steps to clarify this information with someone knowledgeable or with authority. Unfortunately, the internet is so vast and it would be impossible to curb access to all problematic sites. Even if we do that, new ones can pop up almost immediately.

5.	As such, the responsibility lies in all of us, as internet consumers, to determine if what we are viewing and reading online is, as what you would call, "legit". If you feel unsure about a particular website, do not continue reading it. Verify the information that you come across and practise critical thinking.

6.	At the same time, if you see friends or family members around you sharing or talking about things that may raise a red flag, that is, possible signs of radicalisation such as showing support for conflicts that are happening overseas or donating money to unknown entities, you should tell someone about it. I know it's hard to do so, but doing so could very well be the one thing that prevents them from hurting themselves or others.

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION

7.	Beyond the internet, we should also continue to strengthen our social ties with one another. Our social harmony is something that we must protect. The social cohesion that we enjoy is what will help us stand guard against radicalism. To strengthen our social harmony, we need to have a greater understanding of each other. We need to be tolerant and accepting. We need to try to embrace the differences between us and remember that being Singaporean is what unites us all.

CONCLUSION

8.	As I have mentioned, the threat of terrorism is real and everyone has a part to play in fighting the threat of terror. One way is to attend forums like today's so you can better understand the threat of terrorist ideology and the role that you can play to counter this.

9.	This is why I am glad to see so many of you here today to learn how you can foster social cohesion and resilience as a way to fight radicalism.

10.	With that, I hope you will find today's forum a useful and fruitful one. I hope you will encourage your friends and family, to start playing an active role, in keeping our Singapore safe from the threat of radicalism.

Thank you.

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