

Speech By Mr Hawazi Daipi, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry Of Manpower & Ministry Of Health at The *Connect Laos: Social Enterprise In Action* Sending Off Ceremony On Saturday, 31 May 2008, 10.00am at The Event Hall, ITE College East

Dr Ricky Tam

Principal, ITE College East

His Excellency, Mr Thouane Vorasarn

Ambassador, Embassy of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

Mr James Soh

Executive Director, NYAA Council

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

I am happy to join you at this very significant ITE College East's Connect Laos: Social Enterprise in Action Project Sending-Off Ceremony this morning.

This is a very good community project because in a wider context, the young people of Singapore and our surrounding neighbours enjoy a common heritage and will experience a somewhat similar future. There may be variations in outward appearance and languages, but the value system and cultural foundations are not very different.

In order to help our young people recognise their heritage and work towards enhancing regional peace and harmony, understanding and co-operation, we need to provide our younger generation the opportunities and platforms to meet, to establish contact and to interact with one another. Only in this way can the process towards solidarity and co-operation in the region be set in motion.

The ITE College East's Connect Laos: Social Enterprise in Action Project is a very good example of like-minded organisations getting together in partnership for one common cause, which is to help the needy community in Laos.

The NYAA Council has been working closely in partnership with the ITEs in Singapore to provide opportunities and platforms for ITE students to be engaged and contribute not just at the ITE level but also at national and international levels. The ITEs have done well in this area and their contributions have made us proud.

I take this opportunity to thank ITE College East and in particular, Dr Ricky Tam, Principal of the ITE College East for his vision, commitment and willingness to work closely in partnership with the NYAA Council in the development of ITE students at the ITE College East. Many ITE students have excelled from this partnership and collaboration with the NYAA Council. I also understand that at the NYAA Gold Award Holders Alumni Exco- Committee, the ITE Gold Award holders have served and contributed generously and significantly at both the national and the international arenas.

Particularly in this project, I would like to commend Mr Chong Leong Fatt, Director, Student and Academic Services and his dedicated team for their hard work in making this project a success. Your contribution in Laos will not only benefit the Laotian community but also benefit the students from ITE College East as they will surely gain a profound lesson from this trip.

I would also like to thank His Excellency, Mr Thouane Vorasarn, Ambassador of Laos, for taking time off his busy schedule to join us at the ceremony this morning.

The NYAA Council and Board look forward to many more collaborations in helping the needy in our region.

To conclude, I wish all of you a pleasant and fruitful trip to Laos and we look forward to hearing about your experience when you return to Singapore.

Thank you.