

ICA WORKPLAN SEMINAR 2016 “TRANSFORMING ICA: BE PART OF THE JOURNEY”

The Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) held its annual Workplan Seminar (WPS) on 11 May 2016 at the Home Team Academy. The event was graced by Senior Minister of State for Ministry of Home Affairs & Senior Minister of State for Ministry of National Development, Mr Desmond Lee.



**SPEECH BY MR DESMOND LEE, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME
AFFAIRS, AT THE ICA WORKPLAN SEMINAR 2016
11 MAY 2016**

“TRANSFORMING ICA: BE PART OF THE JOURNEY”

Professor Ho Peng Kee, Chairman of Home Team Volunteer Network

Dr Tan Wu Meng, Member of GPC (Home Affairs and Law)

Mr Clarence Yeo, Commissioner ICA,

Home Team Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

1. A very good morning to all of you.

ICA's Performance in 2015

2. ICA performed well in 2015, which was a very busy year for the Home Team for various reasons.

3. 197 million travellers crossed our borders last year.

a. This translates to about half a million travellers a day.

b. You managed this efficiently and effectively, while keeping our borders safe and secure.

4. Through a combination of strict enforcement and proactive public education, we have seen a steady decline in the number of immigration offenders in Singapore.

a. Last year, ICA arrested 1,901 immigration offenders.

b. This was a decrease from 2014.

- c. Over the same period, the number of illegal immigrants and overstayers arrested also fell.
5. Apart from doing well operationally, you have also done well as an organisation.
- a. Last year, ICA was awarded the Singapore Quality Award with Special Commendation.
 - b. This is a pinnacle award marking organisational excellence.
 - c. Congratulations to each and every one of you and ICA for this achievement!

Challenges

6. The theme for this year's Workplan Seminar is "Transforming ICA: Be part of the Journey."
7. This is very timely as the Home Team prepares to tackle three major challenges:
- a. terrorism,
 - b. increasing workload, and
 - c. manpower constraints.

Terrorism

8. First, let me deal with terrorism.
9. The threat is real and is at its highest level in recent times.
10. Coordinated attacks on civilians have taken place in Paris, Jakarta and Belgium in recent months.
11. Closer to home, Malaysia also faces threats of terror attacks.
- a. Last year, Malaysian Police arrested over 100 people with suspected links with ISIS militants.

- b. Just last week, we arrested and detained eight Bangladeshi nationals working in Singapore, under the Internal Security Act.
 - c. They had documents on sniper rifles and bomb-making, and had raised funds to buy weapons to carry out attacks in Bangladesh.
12. Our borders are our vital first line of defence when it comes to fighting the threat of terrorism.
13. Many of you in ICA would have felt the impact first-hand, with the heightened state of alert and enhanced security at our checkpoints.
14. And many of you have done very well, maintaining a constant vigilance, and made several good detections at our checkpoints.
15. Let me share just two examples.
16. Could I request CPL Juliati Binte Mohd Arip and CPL Mohammad Sufi Bin Wahit to stand up?
- a. Both our colleagues were on duty at the Singapore Cruise Centre last November.
 - b. They were alert, and found two foreign nationals to be suspicious.
 - c. They initiated a thorough check of their belongings.
 - d. Various ISIS-related materials were found in these two men's possession.
 - e. It was later discovered that both of them had intended to travel to Iraq to join ISIS.
 - f. CPL Juliati and CPL Mohammad Sufi foiled their plans.
 - g. And we are grateful for their hard work and vigilance. Well done!
17. Next, can we have SGT Rasul Bin Haron and CI Low Thian Ghee please?
- a. Both of them were on duty at the Woodlands Checkpoint in Feb this year.
 - b. They detected four Indonesians behaving suspiciously.
 - c. They conducted checks and uncovered incriminating ISIS-related material in their possession.

- d. The alertness of our two colleagues foiled the plans of these four Indonesians.
 - e. Good work to both! While I cite four officers, many of you have done great work, directly or indirectly contributing in these fashions and others, contributing to the safety of Singapore.
18. So I congratulate them, as well as our 5,000 ICA colleagues who work at our checkpoints 24/7, 365 days a year, to protect and secure our borders and keep us safe in Singapore.
19. We are proud of your dedication, professionalism and sense of duty.
20. All of us in ICA must continue to be thorough in our checks and remain vigilant at all times to spot those with malicious intent.
- a. The safety of our families, our friends and our loved ones depends on your vigilance.
 - b. As you handle very large numbers of travellers on a daily basis, there will often be pressure from members of the public for fast clearance.
 - c. We should certainly maintain our professionalism, be courteous and provide good service to travellers.
 - d. And we will continue to invest in technology and training to do our job faster and do our job better.
 - e. But, our bottom line is this: efficiency cannot be pursued at the expense of security.
 - f. The public largely understands that we have to accept some inconvenience to keep Singapore safe and secure.

Increasing workload and demands

21. The second challenge facing ICA is to meet the increasing volume of travellers and cargo which pass through our borders.
22. Changi Airport Terminal 4 will be completed next year.
- a. We can expect annual air traveller volume through Changi to increase by 50% over the next 10 years.

- b. With future new developments such as Changi Airport Terminal 5, Rapid Transit System and High Speed Rail links coming up – these will add to traveller and cargo volumes through our borders.
23. We also face an increasingly demanding public.
- a. As you perform your duty to safeguard Singapore's security, all of you would have encountered some unreasonable situations.
24. Let me cite an example at Tuas Checkpoint.
25. A motorcyclist was spotted riding recklessly against the flow of traffic in order to cut the long queue at the checkpoint.
- a. When an ICA officer signalled for him to stop, he refused to comply and forced his way between other motorcycles in the queue.
 - b. In doing so, his motorcycle ran over the foot of our ICA colleague.
 - c. He was also aggressive towards other officers when they attempted to detain him, and he hurt another of our colleague in the course of doing so.
 - d. The motorcyclist was charged with two counts of Rash Act Causing Hurt and was sentenced to a \$2,000 fine.
26. Unfortunately, such unpleasant incidents happen and will continue to happen.
27. These incidents are unnecessary, and distract you from doing your duty to maintain security at our checkpoints.

Manpower constraints

28. The third challenge is manpower constraint.
- a. Our workload is increasing.
 - b. Public expectation is also increasing.
 - c. But fewer Singaporeans are coming onto the workforce. In the next five years, the growth in the local labour force will drop by more than half. The rest of the public sector as well as the private sector will be fighting for fewer Singaporean workers.

- d. We want to grow the Home Team and we want to grow ICA to meet the demands of volume, but as you can see, there are natural limits to how far we can push.

ICA's Response

29. Now all these three - terrorism, increasing workload, manpower constraints, these are real and serious challenges not only to Singapore but also to us in ICA.

30. Our response has three prongs:

- a. Develop new operating concepts,
- b. Leverage technology, and
- c. Recruit and retain good officers.

Develop new operating concepts

31. First, developing new operating concepts.

32. The implementation of the Integrated Checkpoints Command (ICC) across the Land, Sea and Air domains last year was a good first step in developing new operating concepts.

- a. The ICC was implemented to consolidate and establish clear command and control structures for Home Team resources across not just ICA, but SPF and CNB based at the various checkpoints.

- b. With the ICC, there are clearer lines of responsibility and accountability at our checkpoints.

c. This has led to operational improvements:

- i. For example, the time taken to resolve incidents at checkpoints is now shorter.
- ii. We see faster operational responses and more successful interceptions of persons and vehicles of interest.

d. I urge you to continue to harness the potential of ICC to improve our border operations.

Leveraging technology

33. Second, we have to leverage technology to enhance our operational effectiveness in the face of increasing workload.

34. I am pleased that ICA will fully implement BIKES II (Biometric Identification of MotorBikers) at both land checkpoints by the end of this year.

35. BIKES II enables *both* the motorcyclist and the pillion rider to simultaneously perform self-clearance - a significant upgrade over BIKES I, an earlier version of this system which only allowed self-clearance by single riders.

36. The full implementation of BIKES II will allow ICA to redeploy some of our colleagues to focus on other operational areas.

- a. For example, officers will be able to conduct more thorough checks on travellers who may be of a higher risk profile.
- b. Overall, this will improve border security and efficiency at land checkpoints.

37. We will also use technology to innovate and develop a new checkpoint clearance concept at the airport terminals.

- a. For the upcoming Changi Airport Terminal 4 which will be operational next year, we will be implementing new concepts that will significantly enhance productivity.
- b. Arrival and departure immigration halls will be designed to improve passenger flow and optimise the deployment of our ICA colleague.
- c. Automated immigration clearance lanes will be enhanced with a two-stage clearance process involving self-help biometric enrolment and automated verification.
- d. This will further streamline the clearance process and improve passenger experience.

Recruiting and retain good officers

38. Third and the most important aspect of our transformation journey will be the focus on our ICA officers.

39. As an organisation, ICA needs to continue to offer exciting and meaningful jobs to attract and retain good officers.

- a. The introduction of the ICC has transformed your work at the checkpoints and provided you with enhanced career development and progression opportunities.

40. We want to make sure that you continue to have opportunities for continual learning and development to prepare you for the challenges in today's complex security landscape.

- a. There are academic sponsorships for those of you who want to pursue further education;
- b. And programmes to identify promising ICA Specialists and provide you with developmental opportunities to progress to Senior Officer rank.

41. ICA has also stepped up recruitment in view of new infrastructure developments such as Changi Airport T4.

42. We have also placed greater emphasis on training and skills upgrading as we takes on new roles.

Conclusion

43. In conclusion, our borders are our first vital line of defence against external security threats.

44. Each and every one of us plays an important role in protecting and securing our borders, and keeping our family safe.

45. The adoption of new operating concepts, greater use of technology and having a great team of professional and competent ICA officers will be paramount in enabling us to meet our mission in the years ahead.

46. I wish all of you a fruitful Workplan seminar. Thank you.

IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY

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