



SPEECH

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Address by Senior Minister of State for Defence Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman at the ACCORD Appreciation and Appointment Function, 23 Jul 16, 1600hrs, Bank of Singapore Lounge, National Stadium

23 Jul 2016

Members of ACCORD,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

I am very delighted to be here today, and to see so many familiar faces and some new ones too. ACCORD has been around since 1984 for those who are not familiar, and it was initially formed as a feedback channel for policies, programmes and issues related to our nation's defence. I am happy to say that its restructuring in 2014 was a good move. We brought in people from the various sectors of society to help engage their communities, and the three sub-councils were able to focus their energies more effectively. Now, ACCORD is not only an advisory council, it is also action-oriented. It actively implements programmes that will better engage stakeholders.

The past two years have been a busy time for us as we worked hard to implement 14 of the 18 proposals submitted to MINDEF/SAF to strengthen commitment to NS and defence among various groups of people, ranging from Full-time National Servicemen to women and new citizens. Fourteen out of 18 proposals done in two years is quite an achievement, and you have seen the video earlier. The last four are well on track.

These proposals have made an impact in several areas. For example, we now have stronger ties and wider reach with the trade associations and companies, thanks to the networking opportunities created by the Singapore

Business Federation and the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Pre-enlistees in the post-secondary education institutions are now able to improve their physical fitness by participating in fitness programmes that ACCORD helped to implement. And through its links to women organisations, ACCORD was able to reach out to more women to help them understand NS and defence. Over the past two years, at least four sessions were organised for them to meet and interact with SAF officers and SAFVC volunteers. Other than the proposals, you went on to do more and initiated the #NeverAgain Movement on 15 February this year to remind people of Singapore's vulnerabilities and the importance of defence and NS. All this would not be possible without the leadership and commitment of every single one of you, our ACCORD members. Because you have taken ownership, we are able to implement all these proposals within a short time.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the three Co-Chairpersons. Thank you, Tony, Claire and Janil. Your leadership and valuable insights enabled ACCORD to reach out to, and deepen our engagements with, the many stakeholders and target groups.

For the 34 ACCORD members who are stepping down, thank you for your time and expertise. You have laid a strong foundation for the next term. I hope that you, as an ACCORD alumni, will continue to be a spokesperson and rally support for NS and Total Defence within your communities.

Thirty seven new ACCORD members will be appointed today. Welcome to ACCORD. As influencers in your own communities and leaders within your professional fields, I believe you will bring fresh perspectives and ideas that can be translated into concrete and sustainable initiatives.

For those who have accepted our invitation to continue your services, thank you for your contributions and your continued support for defence. We are strong only because Singaporeans believe that Singapore is worth defending, and that everyone has a part to play in building a strong defence. ACCORD is important to Singapore's defence because of the vital role all of you play in engaging Singaporeans and helping them to understand and believe in this.

In closing, let me once again express my deepest appreciation to all past and present ACCORD members for your contributions. I also look forward to working with the new members. I assure you that your agreement to join us is worthwhile. May I encourage the councils to embark on new and meaningful projects that will have greater and wider impact on your various sectors of society. I am confident that the work ACCORD does will continue to be important to the SAF and to Singapore.

I hope you have a great time today and do enjoy the spectacular NDP Preview later. Thank you.

News Release:

- SMS Maliki: ACCORD Has Made An Impact with Its Proposals (MINDEF_20160723001.pdf)