

Singapore Government

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OPENING ADDRESS BY MR HARUN A GHANI
POLITICAL SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS
AT THE INTERNATIONAL KOBAN SEMINAR ON WEDNESDAY
30 AUGUST 2000 AT 2.30 PM AT ALLSON HOTEL, PLUM ROOM

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the sixth International Koban Seminar. Both Japan and Singapore are pleased to continue to host this seminar which is into its second five-year series. We are indeed honoured to have so many distinguished guests with us for this seminar.

Success of the NPC system

2 Singapore has grown and changed in many ways over the last 35 years. However, whatever the changes, our citizen and foreigner population alike continue to feel safe and secure within our shores. The key features that are common to both the Koban and Neighbourhood Police Post, or NPP System,

consisting of good counter service, close community relationship and regular house visits, have led to both public confidence and cooperation. The year 1999 saw a remarkable 20.7 per cent fall in crime when compared to 1998. 44.7 per cent of the arrests in major crimes were made with the assistance of the public, an increase from the 32.7 per cent registered for 1998.

Introducing changes into the NPP system

3 The NPP system has been very successful. But we cannot just stop there. We must not develop a sense of complacency in our achievements. We must continue to innovate, anticipate future challenges and come up with new ideas to meet the changes. We have, therefore, re-designed our NPPs into Neighbourhood Police Centres, or NPCs. The new NPCs will cover a larger area and have about 80 officers. With the change, the NPCs will have increased capabilities to better serve the community.

Theme for this year's Seminar

4 The theme for this year's seminar is 'Koban to NPC: Community Policing in the 21st Century'. The seminar will focus on the adaptation of the Koban System into the NPP system in Singapore, as well as the further redesign of the NPP system to the new NPC system. This seminar will also give participants a first hand account of Japan's and Singapore's experiences in community policing.

Community Safety and Security Programme

5 Another initiative to engage the community is the Community Safety and Security Programme, or CSSP. The CSSP is a grassroots initiative to tackle safety and security concerns in the neighbourhoods. Supported by the Home Team, grassroots leaders and residents identify safety and security concerns and come up with solutions to improve the safety and security of their neighbourhoods. The CSSP helps residents to work together, take greater ownership and responsibility for the safety and security of their neighbourhood. Through the CSSP, the

residents collectively own the programmes and enhance social cohesion. Residents have embraced community ownership so wholeheartedly that they have started more than 450 CSSP initiatives to meet safety and security concerns.

6 My colleagues will tell you more about these two new developments in the coming days. We would appreciate your feedback on how to further improve on what we have developed so far.

Forging closer ties and building bonds

7 Apart from sharing our collective knowledge on crime fighting and crime prevention through community policing, this is also a good time for us to forge closer ties and build bonds with our policing counterparts from around the world. The network of police forces established over the last 5 years of this programme will no doubt be further strengthened this year through your participation and interaction.

8 I am confident that this seminar will give you much food for thought about the community policing strategies in your country. Singapore also looks forward to learning from your policing experiences. There is certainly much that we could all achieve together.

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9 I wish you an enjoyable stay in Singapore and a pleasant trip to Japan for the second part of the seminar.

10 Thank you.

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