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SPEECH BY MR CHIN HARN TONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (MHA), AT THE OPENING OF
THE MHA WORK IMPROVEMENT TEAMS (WITS) PRESENTATION 1986
AT THE CIVIL SERVICE INSTITUTE (CSI) AUDITORIUM
ON SATURDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 1986 AT 9.00 AM

I am happy to be here this morning to open this year's MHA WITs presentation, which rounds up the year's WITs activities.

The first Work Improvement Team in our Ministry was formed in May 1982. Since then, the enthusiasm for WITs Movement has caught on. In less than four and a half years, the number of WITs in our Ministry has increased to 255, with about 2,350 active members. To date, they have undertaken a total of 399 projects. More significantly, more than 200 teams have completed at least one project each and, among them, 31 teams have completed at least three projects each.

Implementation of recommendations and suggestions put up by the WITs, and by individual officers through the Ministry's Staff Suggestion Scheme, has resulted in substantial savings each year. In addition, procedures in many areas have been simplified, and this has brought about better service to the public, better working environment for the staff, and higher productivity.

The efforts put in by all of you in promoting and sustaining the productivity movement are most commendable. In particular, I will like to congratulate the "Woodlanders" WIT from Immigration Department who have been selected by

CSI to represent Singapore at an ASEAN Road Show on Administrative Improvements. The team will be going to Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in January 1987 to present a case on how they have made improvements in Woodlands Checkpoint. It is worthy of mention that this is the only WIT to have been selected. It also shows that our Ministry places great emphasis on productivity.

Indeed, in the face of the current economic slow-down, it is all the more important that we must continue to get our staff to be more conscious of productivity, and be more productive. The basic role of the Ministry of Home Affairs is to maintain law and order. In other words, we have a responsibility to our people to ensure that Singapore is a safe place to live in and, for the foreigners, a safe place to invest or to spend their holidays. Experiences elsewhere have shown that when the economy slows down, greater efforts are required to maintain law and order. As our resources are limited, we have to be very careful that we use all our resources in the most efficient and effective manner. Hence, there is a need for stringent control on expenditure and deployment of manpower. Given the financial and manpower constraints, the only way in which we can meet the increasing demand and the challenges ahead is through innovation and productivity, and there is no other better way to harness the creative power of our officers than through the promotion of WITs activities.

In this respect, I am pleased to note that our WITs took part in the National Quality Control Circle (QCC) Convention this year and won 8 gold medals and four bronze medals. I would like to congratulate all of them for their fine achievement.

What we did in the last four and a half years was to ensure that the WITs movement has taken root in our Ministry. More needs to be done to ensure that the movement grows and flourishes. To achieve this, Heads of Departments and senior officers must take the lead in bringing the message of productivity across to every officer at the workplace. The earlier this is understood by all, the better it would be for the nation as a whole. On this note, I wish all the participating WITs a successful presentation this morning.

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