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SPEECH BY MR CHOR YEOK ENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(ENVIRONMENT) AND MP FOR BUKIT TIMAH AT THE OPENING OF THE
CRIME PREVENTION EXHIBITION AT BUKIT TIMAH PLAZA
ON 12 JUNE 1981 AT 7.30 PM

All over the world today there are existence of crimes. The only difference is the number of such cases as the commitment of crime is closely related with the social environment, the living standard of the society and the social discipline of the people. Although the incidence of crime in Singapore compares favourably with many other cities of similar size and population, our crime situation has nevertheless deteriorated since 1979. The preventable offences of robbery, house-breaking, theft and molestations recorded in 1978 were 870, 1,721, 12,071 and 205 respectively. In 1979 the numbers of these offences increased to 1,076, 2,427, 13,805 and 348. In 1980 the property offences again increased to 1,264 robberies, 2,588 house-breakings and 16,106 thefts but molestations dropped to 307. Unreviewed figures for this year show that up to the end of April, 472 robberies, 973 break-ins, 6,179 thefts and 138 molestations had been reported - yet a further increase when compared to 375 robberies, 817 house-breakings, 4,748 thefts and 95 molestations recorded from January to April 1980.

In terms of financial loss, robberies, burglaries and thefts accounted for \$14,828,278 in 1979 and \$26,670,150 in 1980. The projection for 1981 is not encouraging. The loss suffered by victims of molestations in terms of fear, trauma and physical injury is incalculable. This is indeed a needless loss. Many of these criminal cases can be avoided if only adequate preventive measures have been taken. A great number of the offences of robbery, house-breakings and thefts of property which make up more than 60 per cent of all seizeable offences recorded in Singapore, could have been prevented if the victims had taken better security measures and greater care.

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This exhibition is one in a series of nine held at various locations in conjunction with the National Crime Prevention Campaign 1981 and is intended to inform the public of its responsibility in regard to crime and to create a greater crime prevention awareness in the community as a whole. Our Police Force, with its limited manpower cannot, on its own prevent crime everywhere in Singapore. It is therefore incumbent on every member of our community to help prevent crime. Hence the theme for this year's National Campaign is "You Can Help Prevent Crime" as indeed you can.

This exhibition and others in this series display, amongst other things, how the more prevalent preventable crimes are committed, the consequences and most important, how you in the community can take steps to prevent such crimes from being perpetrated against yourselves. Crime prevention literature describing foils against the various preventable crimes are also available at all exhibition centres. I strongly urge all of you to seriously view the exhibits, take back and study the crime prevention literature available and make conscious efforts to implement them in your homes and in respect of other property. You should also spread the crime prevention message amongst your family, neighbours and friends for this is one sure way of countering the threat posed by criminals.

For your information, all Residents' Committees and Citizens' Consultative Committees will actively participate in this National Crime Prevention Campaign led by their respective Members of Parliament. One of their main activities would be, in liaison with the Police, to promote the 'Neighbourhood Watch'. The Neighbourhood Watch is a scheme whereby immediate neighbours band together, get to know one another as well as one another's family routines particularly with regard to movements to and from home. They then work out arrangements to help one another protect themselves against robbers, thieves and molesters by looking after each others' homes and well-being. In effect the Neighbourhood Watch means being a good neighbour, that is to say, being concerned when strangers are seen near a neighbour's home, along the corridors and stairways or near lifts. It also means keeping a friendly eye on your neighbours' children and helping to escort them when leaving or returning home particularly during the hours of darkness within the housing estate. In short the Neighbourhood Watch is the friendly way of keeping your neighbourhood safe and crime free. You are urged to give the scheme your full co-operation and support for by doing so, you will be ensuring a safer and crime free environment for yourselves and your families.

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