STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

May I thank all those who made the Commonwealth delegations' work expeditious, and their stay pleasant. Nearly all Commonwealth leaders have asked me to convey their appreciation to those who were responsible for this.

Over 400 foreign correspondents and their television crews have gone away, carrying with them memories of hard working and courteous Singaporeans. All this will help the reputation of Singapore as a place worth visiting and worth knowing.

The meticulous attention to detail by officers from the Ministries and statutory boards, cut out the tiresome breakdowns and uncomfortable lapses when things go awry. Prior preparation and planning cut out wasted time, with people hanging around waiting for things to be done.

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I commend the P.W.D., the Garden City Action Committee, cleansing workers, airport porters and workers, customs and immigration officers, the security, protocol and liaison officers, the electrical and telecommunication

engineers and technicians, the volunteer chauffers, the lift attendants and the cleaners, for the quiet and efficient dispatch of their work.

The traffic and divisional police were unobtrusive. But they got traffic moving with the minimum of sirens and the least inconvenience to the public. People moved quickly from their hotels to the Conference Hall, to receptions and other destinations. The Special Constabulary of National Servicemen, lining the main routes, helped to make sure that only a few Barisan Sosialis "hit and run" attacks took place. Those few were in the outlying districts.

I must compliment the managers and staff of the hotels, the porters, chamber maids and waiters. The taxi drivers, the salesmen, salesgirls, supervisors and managers of our shops and departmental stores ensured polite and prompt service to our many distinguished guests. It gave that added spice to their stay in Singapore.

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We must continue to show the same cheerful courtesy and friendliness to all visitors. We were already known as a clean, green and thriving city. No amount of tourist promotion can equal the personal verdict of people who have visited us, and found us friendly and courteous, honest and efficient.

Let us now raise our standards. Visitors, from rich or poor countries, are all important persons to us. Make them feel welcome. I promise you that Singapore will be a cleaner and greener place. With the passage of time, there will be more tourists and social amenities. But it is you, ordinary people, who can make this a gracious city, where we are courteous and considerate to each other, and especially to those who visit us.

In this way, each new year will be more prosperous than the last one. And now, let me wish that the new year is also a happy one.

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