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**SPEECH BY MR WONG KAN SENG,
MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
AT THE POLICE DAY PARADE AT THE POLICE ACADEMY
ON FRIDAY, 3 JUNE 1994 AT 5.30 PM**

The Singapore Police Force (SPF) is a key national institution. Police Day serves as a reminder of the important role played by the Police in maintaining law and order, and protecting life and property in our society.

A safe and orderly environment is one of the pillars on which our continued economic growth and social stability depends. As our society progresses, people's expectations of the Police will also grow. Officers in the Force must rise to the challenge. They must serve with a sense of public good to uphold and protect the values and integrity of our criminal justice system.

This is no easy task. It requires a special breed of men and women devoted to duty, which often involves considerable personal risks. The recent death of Sgt Hoi Kim Heng is a tragic reminder of what society owes these men in blue for the peace and security that we enjoy today.

Police Day is also an occasion to recognise the public's contribution to the fight against crime. This has been invaluable. Consistently, over the last five years, a third of all arrests for major offences were made with help from members of the public. Today, we honour 11 such citizens who have risked their personal safety to help apprehend criminals and bring them to justice. Indeed, the Police must work to further strengthen its bond with the community.

An important element of this community-based policing is our Operationally Ready Police National Servicemen. Numbering over 16,000, or more than twice the size of the regular force, these Police NSmen understand the need for the community to work closely with the Police to contain crime. With their experience in police work, they can, if properly trained, organised and motivated, help to strengthen the link between the Police and the community.

Police NSmen are currently formed into Multi-Task Groups. When recalled, they perform general police duties including patrols and crowd control at major public events. They have contributed to keeping our streets safe. However, there is a limit to the level of professionalism that can be attained by them since they are generalists. I am therefore pleased to note that the Police is now embarking on a programme to restructure the Police NS component in recognition of the bigger role that they can and should play in community-based policing.

The restructuring will commence this September and it will be done in phases. Police NSmen will specialise in key areas of front-line policing such as patrol duties, Neighbourhood Police Post (NPP) duties and the guarding of vital installations. Those with the requisite skills will specialise in technical and support duties. These skills will be very much in demand in areas where modern technology has been employed in the fight against crime. NSmen will be specially selected and placed into units according to their ability and aptitude.

The NSmen will also receive a higher level of training. The training for NSmen who have the minimum educational qualifications will be equal in scope and depth to that received by the regulars. With such training they will be able to operate as partners to their regular counterparts. There will be better rewards and recognition for NSmen who do well. Better trained and motivated NSmen will provide Police Commanders greater flexibility in the use of resources. The image, professionalism

and operational readiness of Police NSmen will improve.

With this restructuring, Police NSmen will be able to integrate with the regular officers. Every regular officer, on his part, must treat the NSmen as a partner in the common fight against crime. Each year, 1,500 of the nation's youth are enlisted into the Police Force. It is every regular officer's responsibility to help nurture these NSmen and develop them fully.

I am confident that with this restructuring, the Police Force will be able to upgrade, and make better use of its NS component. This will stand the Force in good stead to meet the challenges of the future, including the growing expectations of the public.

On this note, let me congratulate all of you for a fine turnout and parade. I wish you continued success in your service to the nation.

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