

**OPENING ADDRESS BY MR PETER HO,
HEAD, CIVIL SERVICE AT THE ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICE DINNER & PROMOTION CEREMONY
30 MAR 2006 AT THE GRAND COPTHORNE
WATERFRONT HOTEL**

Deputy Prime Minister, Professor S Jayakumar and Mrs Jayakumar, Ministers,
Chairman, Public Service Commission, Dr Andrew Chew,
PSC Members,
Distinguished Guests,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome to the 18th Administrative Service Dinner and Promotion Ceremony. This annual event marks the significant career milestones of our Administrative Officers. It is an important occasion for Administrative Officers to reflect on our roles in the Public Service and to renew our commitment to the Service and to Singapore.

2 This evening, we are privileged to have Deputy Prime Minister Professor S. Jayakumar grace this occasion as our Guest-of-Honour.

3 I am delighted that some of our retired Permanent Secretaries have joined us this evening. I would also like to recognise our colleagues from the various statutory boards and government departments who are holding Public Sector Leadership appointments. We are partners in service, working together as a team in leading the Public Service to meet future challenges.

State of the Administrative Service

4 First an update on the state of the Administrative Service and the Management Associates Programme. There are now 361 officers in the Administrative Service and the Management Associates Programme. This is a 4% increase over last year. 231 are Administrative Officers, including 41 officers with the SAF. 130 are Dual Career Officers and Management Associates. In the past year, 44 officers were appointed either as Administrative Officers or

Management Associates. Over the same period, 34 officers left the Service for various reasons - 7 retired, 13 resigned, 2 transferred to other schemes, and 12 withdrew from the Dual Career Scheme or the Management Associates Programme.

Developing Leaders for the Public Service

5 The role of the Administrative Service is to develop and implement policies in support of the political leadership to ensure the security, survival and success of Singapore. To do this effectively, it must continue to draw in the best talent, from outside and within the Service, to enlarge and refresh its talent pool. We must have people with different backgrounds and experiences. Although scholarships remain our main source of talent for the Service, we have taken steps to diversify our sources and widen the pipeline of potential candidates. In November last year, the Public Service Division re-started recruitment efforts in local and overseas universities aimed at graduating students who are not on PSC scholarships to join the Management Associates Programme. We are also stepping up efforts to identify and recruit good candidates from within the Public and Private Sectors.

6 Most of our officers are serving in Ministries in various capacities. But we continue to post Administrative Officers to areas outside of the mainstream civil service to widen and diversify their experiences and perspectives. 20 officers are currently serving in statutory boards, and 2 are serving with the Community Development Councils. We have 2 officers on attachment with private sector companies like McKinsey and Temasek Holdings.

7 The Service continues to emphasise training and development to prepare our officers to take on higher responsibilities. 39 officers completed the Foundation Course last year and 12 officers participated in the Senior Management Programme. 8 Administrative Officers are currently pursuing postgraduate studies in public management or business administration in various countries - Australia, China, the US and locally in the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

8 Singapore faces an external environment which is characterised by complexity, turbulence and unpredictability. This demands government that is responsive, adaptable and strategic. It demands that the leadership shares a common ethos, and common perspectives of national imperatives because operating in such an environment requires us to look beyond narrow perspectives. To this end, we will focus on developing officers with a rounded, whole-of-government perspective. Our appraisal system will be re-balanced to give greater weight to inter-agency project work. We want AOs to be able to contribute towards whole-of-government work and not just focus on their individual work deliverables.

Promotion of Administrative Officers

9 I am happy to report that 57 officers will be promoted this year - 34 within the Timescale grades, 10 into the Superscale grade and 13 within the Superscale grades. I offer my congratulations to all who are promoted and wish you all the best as you take on new challenges and more demanding responsibilities.

10 We have an Administrative Service that is in good shape. Its people are committed. It is prepared for change, and prepared to change, ready to face the challenges ahead.

11 It is now my pleasure to invite Deputy Prime Minister, Coordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Law, Professor S. Jayakumar to address us.

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