



TRANSCRIPT

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**CLOSING REMARKS BY SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE, MR ZAQY MOHAMAD,
AT THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN DEFENCE (ACCORD)
APPRECIATION AND APPOINTMENT FUNCTION 2022 ON 23 JULY 2022**

Introduction

1. Very good afternoon everyone, I want to thank all members and our outgoing members. It has been a wonderful two years, although we have had COVID-19 Safe Management Measures in place. It has been a challenging period, and I am glad to recap some of the achievements, which you saw them in some of the slideshows earlier. I know we have had an eventful period, but nonetheless the activities continued, actions flowed through and the support came pouring when we embarked on our NS55 campaign. Credits to all of you.

2. For newly appointed members, the role that we play is really important, in these times where national security becomes of utmost importance, especially the heightened sensitivities with what is going on in Europe with Ukraine, Russia, and the tensions in the South China Sea, national security is something that we cannot take for granted. We can see how its impact flows into our daily living, whether it is higher oil prices, energy prices, food shortage, supply chain disruptions, and so forth. These are things that we grapple with, but this is where the community comes together. Singapore comes together with the industry, employers, associations and the community. We have a role to play as part of our efforts for total defence.

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NS55 ground-up initiatives led by ACCORD members

3. NS55 has gotten off to a very good start. As we commemorate 55 years of NS, we have seen the public come forth with various forms of support. We have seen ground-up initiatives such as StayFit@Work, NS55 TikTok Dance Challenge and overwhelming participation for the NS55 Fitness Challenge. Our initial target was just 55 million steps, but we have reached 550 million steps, 10 times past target.

4. So it is heartening to see the overwhelming support for National Service (NS). For ACCORD, we have got a lot of participation from students and schools as well – collation of Stories on Employers Support, NS55 Students Fitness Challenge by Temasek Polytechnic and Republic Polytechnic, NS55 Art Challenge by Global Indian International School, NS55 Social Media Engagement by United World College SEA. Our international schools have got in game with many of our Institutes of Higher Learning. We hope that we can continue this momentum with the new term of ACCORD and push forth this support in the community because it is important to show how we appreciate the contributions and service of our NSmen.

Greater Representation of Women and Youths in ACCORD

5. We are also so excited this round that we have a higher participation of women in ACCORD. We thank the teams for putting this balance, and this is part of ACCORD's focus in generating group support for NS and total defence. All of us have a role to play.

6. I want to introduce to you Ms Trina Liang, she is now the ACCORD Family & Community Co-Chairperson, and we look forward to working with her closely.

Sharing Aspirations in the Way Forward

7. Let us continue to do our part. Both SMS Heng and I look forward to working with you, achieving more with fellow NSmen and for total defence.

8. Thank you very much.

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