

## Teo Chee Hean says he will continue to take care of civil service

**S Ramesh,**

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SINGAPORE: Remaining connected and understanding the concerns of the people during the current recession, so that policies drawn up to help them are well executed -- this is one area the new Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Teo Chee Hean will be focussing on, besides continuing as Defence Minister and Minister-in-Charge of the Civil Service.

Meanwhile, political watchers said the latest cabinet reshuffle, which takes effect in April, is a small but important step towards leadership renewal in the country.

Mr Teo Chee Hean said he was approached by the Prime Minister two weeks ago about his new posting.

He said: "It's a very heavy responsibility, and I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his trust and confidence. I know, as with all my colleagues in the Cabinet, that whenever we take up such a position, we need to work for the people of Singapore and make sure that all that we do is for the good of Singapore and Singaporeans."

Besides the Ministry of Defence (Mindef), Mr Teo Chee Hean has also served in several other key ministries, among them the Education Ministry. He also takes care of matters concerning the civil service.

Political analysts said this will benefit him as the new DPM and also when he has to be the Acting Prime Minister when the Prime Minister is away.

Mr Teo Chee Hean said he is only three years younger than the Prime Minister, hence the need to continue with the process of leadership renewal. Also being closely watched -- the roles being planned out for Singapore's first full woman minister, Lim Hwee Hua.

Senior research fellow at Institute of Policy Studies, Gillian Koh, said: "We will wait to see what kind of portfolio she will be managing under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). All these portfolios at PMO deal with cross-cutting issues across many bureaucracies and that's quite an onerous task".

For Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development, Youth and Sports Ministry Teo Ser Luck, he said his new appointment as a North East District Mayor gives him a bigger platform to serve more residents.

He said: "The objectives of the Community Development Council (CDC) should be to stay with the times and be relevant to the times. Now that we have the economic downturn, we have to figure what kind of social programmes we can have to help the residents. And even if we have bonding programmes and activities where we have fun and games, we have to consider what activities are more suitable to build pillars like a

compact family unit within a society." And this is all the more important during these tough economic times where CDCs are busy rolling out programmes to help residents in difficulties.