

**TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH BY PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL LEE HSIEN LOONG
AT THE POST-GENERAL ELECTION APPRECIATION DINNER ON 12 JULY 2022**

A very good evening, Comrades!

Tonight's dinner is to thank our Comrades who retired as MPs in GE 2020, as well as all our MPs and candidates for your hard work and good fight in that General Election. Normally we would have held it soon after the General Election, but because of COVID, we have had to postpone the event until now. So I am very glad that we can finally gather in person tonight.

It has been a tough two and a half years, fighting COVID. The battle is not over, but we have come a long way and made much progress. As a whole, Singapore has not done badly. We have protected the lives and livelihoods of many Singaporeans.

A key factor in this has been the strong trust between Singaporeans and the PAP government, and more broadly the high trust levels within our society. This trust was not something established only when the pandemic hit us. It is the result of hard work and bonds forged over decades, by successive generations of PAP leaders and MPs and the voters who have supported us, and supported the party that we stand for. This enabled the PAP to win the mandate of voters and to serve Singapore, especially in a crisis.

Tonight, I would like to acknowledge the good work by the 20 MPs who have retired, and thank you for your many contributions to the Party and to Singapore. I have recorded some of these contributions in my valedictory letters to you. Preparing these letters, I was struck afresh by the wide range of issues that you handled, the diversity of projects you implemented, as well as the intensity of your engagements not just with residents, but also other community groups, in order to win their support and consolidate the ground.

A significant part of your duties was in Parliament. Asking questions and speaking up for your residents. Providing feedback to help improve Government policies. Ensuring that bills are thoroughly debated and properly scrutinised before they are passed. Often you did this work through the Government Parliamentary Committees (GPCs), where you could focus on a specific ministry and make a deeper contribution. Depending on your personal backgrounds and interests, different MPs have championed different issues close to your hearts. **Lily** spoke passionately for the elderly and under-privileged. **Zainal** advocated for lower-wage workers. **Hin Kee** spoke up for taxi and private hire drivers. **Bee Wah** championed her residents at every opportunity with every Minister, and did so memorably and vividly. Your questions and interventions in the Chamber have shown Singaporeans that their voices are being heard, and their concerns addressed.

The other major part of the MP's job is outside Parliament, to tend the ground in your constituencies and wards. Every constituency is different. The profiles of residents vary, along with their needs and aspirations. So the MPs have set different priorities, and shaped their constituencies in different ways through various projects. **Chok Tong** oversaw the transformation of Marine Parade into a vibrant waterfront hub for MParaders over 43 years. **Hng Kiang** reinvigorated Telok Blangah and brought nature closer to residents. **Yaacob** developed beautiful waterways through the ABC Waters Programme, including in Kolam Ayer. **Yi Shyan** rejuvenated the 40-year-old Bedok Town Centre with Heartbeat@Bedok, an integrated community hub. You and your grassroots teams have given much thought and attention to your constituencies. The Government has supported promising ideas, and worked hand-in-hand with the MPs and grassroots advisors to deliver results.

You have also initiated schemes to expand common spaces, mobilising residents and bringing different groups together to build the community spirit. **Boon Wan** re-imbued the kampung spirit in his

residents, encapsulated in the *Sayang Sembawang* tagline. **Fatimah** organised many fun community events in Geylang Serai, adding something like 25 entries to the Singapore Book of Records, including one Guinness World Record – the “largest mass mini-trampoline workout”. **Ho-Pin** popularised brisk walking groups at Bukit Panjang and then North West CDC, which grew into a national network, and **Teng Koon** initiated sports programmes for the youth at Woodgrove Division.

As MPs, you have spent countless hours listening to and engaging your residents. Understanding their problems and working hand-in-hand with agencies and community partners to solve them. Like **Cedric** who advocated for the formation of Frontier Primary School, eventually and successfully. **Sam Tan** led rejuvenation projects in Radin Mas to make amenities more accessible. **Ser Luck** offered free co-working spaces at Sengkang Community Club for residents. He should have IPO. One issue which every MP pays close attention to is taking good care of the vulnerable in our society, including especially low-income families and the elderly. They deserve all the help and support we can give. So not surprisingly many of you implemented your own schemes to support them in your own constituencies, on top of what the government is doing. **Intan** had a Home@Jalan Kayu scheme that improved home conditions for needy families. **Shi-Lu** helped set up a Silver Zone in Lengkok Bahru. **Chia Hsing** launched an initiative for residents to pay it forward, by buying coffee and tea for vulnerable residents.

But most importantly, besides all these community activities, you did the political work, mobilising support for the party and winning votes in elections. We must never do things solely for political advantage. But unless good policies and good work translate into votes and electoral success, they cannot endure. You never shied away when the Party needed you to contest during election time. **Charles Chong** is a prime example. Each time the Party anticipated a tough fight, we sent him to do battle there – and he always carried the day for us, through his savvy campaigning and I was going to say personal charm but better to say

personal touch. **Swee Say** too, in a quite different way. We redeployed him more than once, and each time through his unique brand of retail politics, intensively cultivating residents block by block, explaining things in the way only he can, which is if I may say, same same but different, he won them over.

These are just a small sample of all the work that you have done, over many years as MPs. But they give a sense of the scope and significance of MPs' duties, and explain why being an MP is so demanding, yet so fulfilling.

And this is also perhaps why for many MPs, stepping down is not an easy adjustment to make. It is hard to let go of the close ties formed with your residents. You hanker for that adrenaline rush. The next problem to solve. The next Minister to hassle. For me too, it has been a difficult task to ask you to step down to make way for your successors. I am grateful for your understanding and big-heartedness on this, for your efforts in guiding and supporting your successor. And for your appreciation that we need to do this to keep up leadership renewal in our Party, and make sure that Singapore always has the strongest team to lead it, both now and into the future.

So to all the comrades who have retired. Thank you once again for your service to your constituents and to Singapore and also a big thank you to your spouses and families. They have sacrificed much, so that you could devote time and attention to your residents, and give your best as MPs and Advisors.

The Party continues to need new generations of people like you to come forward, enter the political arena, and fight for the support of Singaporeans and the future of Singapore. People with integrity, commitment and ability. People with the grit to take the rough and tumble of politics, and the passion and imagination to build a better Singapore. Also people with diverse experiences and backgrounds. Some think that since PAP MPs all wear white and white, they are also

monochrome in their ideas and perspectives. But this view is quite mistaken. In fact we do our utmost to field a diverse team, and make sure that every MP brings something different to the table. Each of you represents the aspirations and concerns of a different segment in our diverse society. Each of you has a slightly different network and different people whom you reach out to. Your varied perspectives help make our policies more grounded and robust. We must maintain this diversity in our ranks, keep our party a broad tent, and field the best possible team in the next General Election. And that work is underway, but that speech is for another occasion.

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In these very challenging times, and especially in such times. We must keep the Party renewed, vigorous and in touch with Singaporeans. The MPs currently serving have taken over the mission from you, and will build on what you have accomplished. You can rest assure that they will do that so that the PAP can continue to serve Singaporeans well, and secure our future for many years to come.

Thank you!