

SINGAPORE'S 58TH NATIONAL DAY DINNER
SPEECH BY SCCCI PRESIDENT KHO CHOON KENG
8 AUGUST 2023
THE RITZ-CARLTON, MILLENIA SINGAPORE

Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Trade and Industry,
Your Excellencies,
Ministers of State,
Members of Parliament,
Senior Government Officials,
SCCCI Council Members and Members,
Leaders of Community Organisations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening everyone!

1. The Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCCI) organises the National Day Dinner every year, as we gather here to celebrate, express gratitude, and look into the future on this important day in Singapore's nation-building journey. Thank you everyone for your strong support! First and foremost, let us look back into history as we watch this video clip.
2. This year also marks the 100th birth anniversary of our founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew. Although Mr Lee is no longer with us physically, his demeanour and influence lives on forever. Singapore has developed from a country with a lack of resources to

the prosperous garden city today. All these would not have been possible without the late Mr Lee and our forefathers' visionary thinking and hard work. Let us pay tribute and express our gratitude to them with a round of applause!

3. In this garden city, Singaporeans live and work happily together, people from the different ethnic groups live together harmoniously in a country with high international reputation and economic prosperity. From the video clip titled "From Mudflats to Metropolis" that we have just watched, beyond the skyscrapers as well as the highly developed and liveable city, it is also important to create the software and heartware that meet Singaporeans' needs and are recognised internationally. This is exactly what Mr Lee Kuan Yew emphasised in the National Day Rally 1988! I believe these elements have already become part of Singapore's development!

Humility and Gratitude amid Success

4. For Singapore to continue progressing, Singaporeans should remain humble and grateful despite achieving success. We need to bear in mind that success does not happen by luck and should not take it for granted. "One generation plants the trees under whose shade another generation enjoys". Without the noble spirit and determination of our forefathers, there would not be the Singapore that we have today. This also confirms that timeless principle of "he who does not advance loses ground"!
5. Therefore, we cannot be complacent as Singapore achieves great success. We need to foster a greater sense of belonging, responsibility and purpose. At the recent Book Launch of "Will Singapore Exist in a Hundred Years", Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat reminded us that the next few years will be even more challenging. He said, "Externally, due to geopolitical factors, Singapore's foundation of success through openness is slowing down, and there may even be a reversal. Internally, we are also

influenced by factors such as digitalisation, social media and identity politics. These trends could potentially divide our society.”

SCCCI Supports Singapore’s Development, Overcoming Challenges Together

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. The theme of this year’s National Day Parade is “Onward As One” – calling upon Singaporeans to look forward confidently and move onward together in building our shared future as one united people.

7. With patriotism as SCCCI’s guiding principle, we firmly believe that you must “have a country to have a home”. Beyond the economy, SCCCI also actively supports the Government’s efforts in building education, national defence, as well as a multiracial and harmonious society that form the bedrock of the nation.

8. In the face of uncertainties, SCCCI remains committed to be the bridge between local communities, building a united society. Secondly, to be a hub connecting Singapore with the international market, promoting regional economic prosperity. Thirdly, SCCCI will uphold our forefathers’ selfless spirit of “benefitting from the society and contributing back to the society”, contributing actively to nurture Singapore’s next generation. Fourthly, with green transformation as a megatrend, we will support Singapore’s efforts to combat climate change and play our part to build a safe and liveable home.

9. I also sincerely invite businesses to leverage on SCCCI’s role as the “hubs” to scale greater heights. These “hubs” include: Strengthen communication between the Government and businesses; help companies to digitalise and improve enterprise capabilities; help businesses to internationalise; and help companies to build

capabilities for sustainable development. Recently, SCCCI held dialogues with our Guest-of-Honour today – Minister Gan Kim Yong, Former Senior Minister Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, Ms Grace Fu, respectively, to help our members gain a deeper understanding of the market and opportunities for growth, as well as the latest developments on renewing our social compact!

10. As we celebrate this National Day, let us face the challenges of the new era with courage. As long as Singaporeans forge ahead together – “Onward As One”, we will definitely emerge stronger. I wish our country a happy 58th birthday as well as solidarity, peace and prosperity. I also wish all of you good health and success in your endeavours! Thank you.
