

“精诚携手，共拓新程” —— 黄循财总理兼财政部长欢迎晚宴
“HAND IN HAND, CHARTING A NEW SINGAPORE
JOURNEY”

WELCOME DINNER IN HONOUR OF PRIME MINISTER AND
MINISTER FOR FINANCE LAWRENCE WONG
SPEECH BY SCCCI PRESIDENT KHO CHOON KENG
29 NOVEMBER 2024
HILTON SINGAPORE ORCHARD

Mr Lawrence Wong, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance,
Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and
Minister-in-Charge of Trade Relations,
Members of Parliament,
Senior Government Officials,
Mr Thomas Chua, President of Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan
Associations,
Leaders of the Chinese community,
Friends from the business community,
Students and Distinguished Guests,

Good evening!

1. I am very grateful and honoured to be here today with our Chinese community to extend our heartiest congratulations and warmest welcome to Mr Lawrence Wong on his appointment as Prime Minister of Singapore!
2. Since being entrusted with the leadership of our 4G Government in April 2022, PM Wong has spearheaded numerous impactful policies. These include the Forward Singapore exercise; actively promoting our Chinese culture and raising the standard of mother tongue; addressing inflation and the rise in cost of living; fostering a pro-business and pro-family environment; as well as supporting youth employment and home ownership, which we are deeply grateful for. We also deeply admire PM Wong's boldness, capabilities, and vision in spearheading these initiatives.

3. At this year's National Day Rally, PM Wong spoke about the very heavy responsibility as Prime Minister and that you will do your best while being mentally prepared that your hair will turn white. Today, we are happy to see that your hair remains black, and you are full of vitality. We wish you great health, strength and happiness. As we enjoy a hearty meal together, "PM, we would like you to have many many more ounces of energy to be devoted to our country and people" as you lead Singapore forward!
4. PM Wong also said, "Your dreams will inspire my actions. Your concerns will guide my decisions." On behalf of the Chinese community, our dream is for you to always be healthy, happy and maintain your black hair. However, we also worry that you might not be eating well and eating enough! We hope that you will value the care and concern we have for you, and turn them into action!
5. In this ever-changing world with geopolitical uncertainties, Singapore will have to grapple with challenges as we forge ahead. Therefore, the theme of tonight's dinner, "精诚携手，共拓新程 (Hand in Hand, Charting a New Singapore Journey)", represents the sincerity and confidence of the Chinese community. We are fully committed to working hand in hand with the Government to chart our new way forward together as one united people. In PM Wong's words, "let us devote every ounce of our energy to serve the country, remain united as Singaporeans and speak with one voice on the world stage"!
6. PM Wong spoke about building a government "that is both prudent and bold" that empowers young people to explore new paths and take bold steps to realise a "refreshed Singapore Dream". The Chinese community is committed to support our Government in building a Singapore where we can all flourish and feel a deep sense of belonging!

7. PM Wong also shared that he used to be teased for being “jiak kentang¹”. Although PM Wong relied on rote memorisation to learn Chinese, he managed to score A1 for his O-Level Chinese. This shows the amount of hard work that PM Wong has put in to lay a strong Chinese language foundation. With this experience, PM Wong expressed that Singapore should have people who are proficient in Chinese as well. We fully support the Government’s commitment to nurture more students who are proficient in the Chinese language and place a greater emphasis on mother tongue education.

8. Amid global uncertainties, we are thankful that Singapore is part of a stable and united ASEAN that is committed to advancing regional economic integration. In the past six months since taking office, PM Wong has visited regional countries including Malaysia, Brunei, Laos, Indonesia and Thailand, with recent visits to Peru and Brazil to participate in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Meeting and G20 Summit respectively. Thank you for your hard work! We are very happy to see PM Wong forge international friendships, paving the way for Singapore’s future. To our fellow businesses, let us develop a broader international perspective to seize opportunities and achieve new breakthroughs!

9. At the same time, business chambers and clan associations embody and perpetuate the Chinese Entrepreneurial Spirit. Let us live out the values of “patriotism, integrity, succession, innovation and uniting businesses”, supporting one another to share the fruits of economic growth with our wider community.

10. Next year marks a significant milestone as we celebrate 60 years of Singapore’s independence. As PM Wong has emphasised, “It is and should be an opportunity for all of us to reflect on our shared values, who we are as Singaporeans and what we stand for. It should be an opportunity for us to renew our commitment to Singapore. To do our part, to build our shared future together.” From today onwards, let us work together with sincerity, trust and

¹ Translates to “eat potatoes”. The term refers to Asians who are more westernised in their habits and preferences.



gratitude as we journey “Hand in Hand, Charting a New Singapore Journey”! Thank you.
