

**JOINT INITIATIVE  
“GRATEFUL FOR THE PRESENT,  
NURTURING THE FUTURE”  
IN SUPPORT OF  
THE LEE KUAN YEW CENTENNIAL FUND  
SPEECH BY  
SCCCI PRESIDENT MR KHO CHOON KENG  
15 SEPTEMBER 2023  
SCCCI BUILDING**

尊敬的副总理兼财政部长黄循财先生，  
教育部长陈振声先生，  
人力部长兼贸工部第二部长陈诗龙医生，  
新加坡宗乡会馆联合总会会长蔡其生先生，  
新加坡马来商会主席 Abu Bakar Mohd Nor 先生，  
新加坡印度商会主席 Neil Parekh 先生，  
新加坡欧亚人协会会长 Sandra Theseira 女士，  
各位嘉宾，  
女士们、先生们，

1. 大家下午好！代表新加坡四大种族的五大社团和商会：新加坡宗乡会馆联合总会、新加坡马来商会、新加坡印度商会、新加坡欧亚人协会及新加坡中华总商会联合推动的“饮水思源、共育贤才”活动，今天划上圆满句号。我谨代表所有参与机构和人士，非常感恩和荣幸地宣布：我们成功为“李光耀百年树人基金”筹到超过一千万元的善款，代表着全民的支持心意。这些款项将用于教育事业，向年轻一代传承李光耀精神，培养国家未来栋梁之才。

2. 这项活动也展示了本地多元种族社会的团结精神。我们尤其鼓励年轻一代通过这项活动，追思建国总理李光耀先生的贡献、价值观及行事原则，这些要素对新加坡当前和未来的发展仍然很重要。我们坚信培育本地年轻人是一项意义深远的重任，为国家发展发挥永续效益。通过这项意义非凡的活动为新加坡在栽培年轻人才方面尽一份绵力，我们也深感荣幸。

接下来，我将以英语继续发言：

3. On behalf of the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations (SFCCA), the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCCI), the Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SMCCI), the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) and the Eurasian Association (EA), Singapore, I would like to thank our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Mr. Lawrence Wong, Minister for Education Mr. Chan Chun Sing as well as Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Trade and Industry Dr Tan See Leng for your presence today. My deep appreciation also goes to all of you for taking time out of your busy schedule to join us this afternoon.
4. For the very first time, our five business chambers and associations representing Singapore's various racial groups have come together to organise this joint initiative titled "Grateful for the Present, Nurturing the Future". Our objective is to bring to Singaporeans' mind, particularly the next generation and beyond, of our founding Prime Minister Mr. Lee Kuan Yew's contributions, as well as his

values, beliefs and principles that remain relevant for Singapore's present and in the future.

5. On this initiative, we have consciously planned to reach out to engage SMEs, trade associations, clans, schools and community partners – all of whom constitute to the backbone of our society. We are glad that this endeavor has galvanized Singaporeans and our community from all walks of life to pledge their support by signing on the signature books and donating to the Lee Kuan Yew Centennial Fund. What is truly heart-warming is that regardless of our background and donation amount, this ground-up initiative has mobilized all levels of our society, and reflects nation-wide unity as well as the strong bonding between the different ethnic groups in Singapore. Today, we are delighted to announce that we have successfully raised more than \$10 million for the fund!
  
6. Back in September 1965, a month after Singapore's independence, the late Mr. Lee Kuan Yew emphasized that [I quote] "it is the quality, the mettle of a people which decides its future" [Unquote]. At the National Day Rally in 1970, Mr. Lee said in Mandarin: [I quote] "眼睛不能放在鼻子上" [Unquote], which means "Don't place your eyes on your nose". Mr. Lee had wanted to highlight the importance of having foresight and vision – to be able to see far and high! A vision of what Singapore would become in 10, 20 and even 100 years. Today, Singapore has grown from a country which lacks natural resources to become a vibrant and prosperous garden city known and admired internationally. This remarkable progress would not have been possible without Mr. Lee's visionary thinking, determination, resilience and one of his key strategies being "to develop Singapore's only available natural resource – its people".

7. I believe all would agree that Singapore's high-quality and successful education system is one of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew's most enduring legacies. Besides equipping our students with essential lifelong skills such as creativity, collaboration and innovation that are critical in this rapidly changing world, values such as respect, responsibility, resilience, integrity, and contributing back to the society are also passed down to our future generations. These values form the bedrock of Singapore's cohesive, multi-racial and multi-cultural society. In other words, beyond the "hardware" which are the world-class infrastructure as well as the highly developed and livable city, it is also important that we nurture the "software" and "heart ware" that make us united, cohesive and distinctive.
  
8. This joint initiative thus demonstrates and exemplifies our "kampung spirit" – to have a strong sense of community spirit and solidarity with our fellow Singaporeans. In tandem with the "Forward Singapore" exercise, this collaboration among the five organizations signifies the combined effort of the various ethnic groups to help strengthen our social compact. The mutual trust and spirit of collaboration among the different ethnic groups today have formed a firm and solid foundation for us to come together to drive a common cause. We look forward to working even closer with one another in the future.
  
9. Tomorrow (16 September) will be the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the late Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. The phenomenal rise of Singapore from a third to a first world country within a few decades was not by chance nor a given, it is indeed the result of the leadership of Mr. Lee and Singapore's founding leaders. This noble spirit is a perfect

illustration of the Chinese saying “前人种树，后人乘凉”， which reflects the hard-truth of the sacrifices of Mr. Lee and our pioneering forefathers for laying the foundation of a secure, stable and prosperous Singapore that we enjoy today. On this note, let us put our hands together to express our deepest appreciation and respect to Mr. Lee as we commemorate his 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary!

10. In closing, I wish to once again express my heartfelt thanks to Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Lawrence Wong for your presence as our Guest-of-Honour; Minister Chan Chun Sing and Minister Tan See Leng for joining us today. I am indeed very grateful towards SFCCA, the Malay Chamber, Indian Chamber and the Eurasian Association for their partnership and support as we collectively drive this joint ground-up initiative. On behalf of our five organizations, we would also like to express our sincere appreciation to each and every one of you who have contributed towards the success of this initiative. Last but not least, I wish all of you good health and success in your endeavors!

11. 最后，我由衷感谢宗乡总会、马来商会、印度商会及欧亚人协会的密切合作、感谢大家的出席和支持，使这项意义深远的“饮水思源、共育贤才”筹款签名活动圆满成功。李光耀先生虽然斯人已逝，但他的精神和智慧永垂不朽，启发着一代又一代的新加坡人。让我们一起以谦虚学习和深深感恩的心，将李光耀精神传承、发扬光大！谢谢！

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