

**SPEECH BY 2nd ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL
CHAN CHUN SING
AT PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY AWARDS CEREMONY 2021
ON SATURDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2021, MORNING SESSION**

Secretary-General Lee Hsien Loong,
Fellow Comrades

1. A very good morning to all of you! Welcome to Party Awards 2021.

2. I am sure, deep in our hearts, all of us share a special feeling this morning to be able to come together once again, over the next two days for our Party Awards and Convention, in spite of COVID-19. Thank you for being here and thank you for all the hard work that you have put in for the party and our country.

3. The last two years have not been easy for all of us.
 - a. COVID-19 has disrupted our lives and livelihoods.
 - b. We have tried our best and our hardest to minimise any fatalities.
 - c. But despite our best efforts, we have still lost some of our loved ones.

4. While the battle is not over, we have much to give thanks for:
 - a. Our frontline and essential services workers who kept us going – from securing critical supplies to food and energy.
 - b. Our security agencies that continue to protect and keep us safe.
 - c. Our last line healthcare workers who went all out to look after, care for and save everyone possible.
 - d. Our fellow Singaporean who went out of his or her way to support fellow neighbours, friends, colleagues and even strangers, through these challenging times.

- e. There are many more examples in our community. And there are many amongst all of you here who are part of this story of how we battle COVID-19.
5. Through this all, the best of our Singapore Spirit was on display.
- a. A spirit that speaks of the care for one another, through thick and thin.
 - b. A team spirit that does not yield or buckle under pressure.
 - c. The spirit of our nation that's determined to emerge stronger and more cohesive through it all.
6. There's much that we still need to do, to get beyond COVID. We have just received news that there is now a new variant of concern, which will certainly require us to review our policies and posture quickly.
7. However, while we continue to battle COVID, we must not lose sight of the longer term and bigger challenges that still confronting us.
- a. First. The geopolitical situation will be more challenging for us to navigate as the major powers compete and contest, and hopefully not descend into conflict.
 - i. We need strong, wise leadership and a united people to read the winds and ride the waves together.
 - b. Second. Our domestic populace will have more diverse aspirations and higher expectations of us as a Party and Government, to deliver more and better, even as we face greater challenges in budget, manpower, land and even carbon.
 - i. There will be more difficult decisions that we need to make and convince our people that we are always doing our best for our country and all Singaporeans.
 - c. Third. A new generation of Singaporeans will want to have new connections and a new compact with a new generation of leaders.

- i. We will have to earn the trust and confidence of this generation anew.
 - ii. We cannot expect to inherit this from previous generations, no matter how well our track record may be.
 - iii. Singaporeans are just like savvy investors. Like any good long-term investments, strong and sustainable returns come from a strong partnership between the stakeholders and the stewards - partnering, trusting, and supporting each other to ride through the short-term challenges.

- 8. To respond to these challenges, our Party will need to:
 - a. First, provide a sense of assurance and security to our people amidst the challenges and disruptions.
 - i. This is especially so for the older and middle-aged Singaporeans who have kept faith with us through the years.

 - b. Second, we will need to provide a sense of hope for all Singaporeans to believe that we can still succeed together, regardless of our starting point in life.
 - i. As the challenges of economic inequalities and inter-generational immobility threaten to grow, the more we need to do to counter any stratification that may develop and tear our society apart.
 - ii. We will keep working on this to assure Singaporeans, especially those from less privileged backgrounds, that this will be a Singapore for us all.
 - iii. We will continue to have a Singapore for the diverse talents who are committed to work together and bring it to a higher plane.

 - c. Third, we will need to provide a sense of participation and contribution by all Singaporeans, especially the young.
 - i. This will be a Party that not only works for you, but more importantly, this will be a Party that works with you.

- ii. Material wellbeing and good policies are necessary but not sufficient to win over a new generation that has come to expect nothing less.
- 9. Comrades, our Party has our work cut out.
 - a. We must never assume that being the longest continuous governing party in a democratic system, that we will naturally have the right to lead and to serve.
 - i. We must work on the basis that others are trying to improve and displace us. We must stay ahead of the competition – not just for ourselves or our party, but most importantly, for our country. Constantly improving all aspects of our work from the way we do ground operations to communications and more.
 - b. Comrades, like those who will be receiving their awards this morning, never believe that we can be complacent, and risk losing the right to lead and serve Singaporeans and Singapore to anyone else or any other Party less deserving.
 - c. In our endeavour to win the right to lead and serve, we are also fighting for the kind of values that will define Singapore.
 - i. We want capable and committed people to lead and serve.
 - ii. We want cohesive teams to put our people, our party, and our country's interests before theirs.
 - iii. We want honest and upright people to be upfront and not betray the trust of our people.
 - d. To achieve all these, we will need to constantly strengthen and rejuvenate our ranks. It is our responsibility, everyone of us, to look for the best and most committed people to join us in our cause to keep Singapore going, growing, and glowing.
- 10. We have been fortunate thus far. To have individuals like you, our Comrades, who have stepped up and come forward to serve. But this is a never-ending task to convince more to come forward to join our ranks.

11. Today, we recognise the dedication and contributions of 672 activists over two sessions. Your selfless commitment to serve Singapore and Singaporeans is an inspiration to us all. I will not be able to name everyone, but please allow me to mention a few of our comrades.

Dedicated Service Star Medal

12. Many of you will be familiar with 76-year-old Xavier Samy from Marymount Branch. Having served the Party for 57 years, Comrade Xavier Samy is a walking history book of sorts. He can recount in detail the many rallies, elections, and National Day parades that he has participated in as a party member. He served in Tanjong Pagar Constituency from the late 1960s to the nineties before moving to Bishan and continued to serve the residents at Bishan North. The years of serving alongside the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew has ingrained in Comrade Xavier Samy the importance of feedback, and most importantly lending an ear to those in need. Now, he continues to play an active role at Marymount Branch, helping with branch activities, and mentoring young activists. For his many years of dedicated service, Comrade Xavier Samy is awarded the Dedicated Service Star Medal. Congratulations, Comrade Xavier Samy!

Long Service Silver Medal

13. Comrade Azmi Bin Jais from Paya Lebar branch joined the Party 16 years ago after he retired from the Police Force. He was helping at the grassroots organisations and thought that he could contribute more by joining the Party. Comrade Azmi has never regretted his decision. Even as he is now serving in Aljunied GRC, he remains committed and driven as he believes that the Party will win it back one day. Paya Lebar branch organises food ration for needy families once a month, and the smiles on the faces of the needy families are all that matter

to him. Comrade Azmi is one of our Long Service Silver Medal recipients. Congratulations, Comrade Azmi!

Long Service Bronze Medal

14. Vice Chair of Yio Chu Kang branch's youth group, Comrade Toh See Woon, has been serving the Party over the past 10 years. She was inspired to join the Party and do more for the community after attending a Meet-the-People session as part of an immersion programme in school. She finds fulfilment in helping residents and appreciates the friendships she has forged with fellow activists. Earlier this year, Young PAP activists distributed beds to needy families in the constituency. This initiative made her realise how we need to actively take care of those with less among us. She had shared and I quote, "It is important to look out for families who might fall through the cracks. We must ensure that no one is left behind." Comrade Toh See Woon is one of our Long Service Bronze Medal recipients. Congratulations, Comrade See Woon!
15. The Comrades that I have mentioned are just a few among the many today to show what it means to serve. Day in and day out, many more silently toil away.
16. Fellow Comrades and activists – thank you all.
 - a. You are the reason we are able to be here today.
 - b. Through the toughest of times, you have continued serving those in need, calming those in fear, and rallying those in doubt.
 - c. Because of you, notwithstanding our challenges, I am confident that together, we will emerge stronger as one.
17. Thank you for inspiring us and thank you for reminding us of the reasons to serve.