

**SPEECH BY CHAIRMAN HENG SWEE KEAT AT THE PAP70
DINNER AND AWARDS CEREMONY 2024, 23 NOVEMBER 2024**

Secretary-General Lee Hsien Loong,

Deputy Secretary-General Lawrence Wong,

Brothers and Sisters from the NTUC

Comrades,

1. Good evening! Welcome to our Party Dinner and Awards Ceremony 2024.
2. Indeed, this year, the PAP proudly celebrates our 70th anniversary — a significant milestone of the progress we have achieved together with Singaporeans.
 - a. To commemorate this, we have commissioned a postcard set which depicts 70 iconic moments in Singapore’s journey. You only saw a glimpse of these 70 iconic moments.
 - b. They reflect our Party’s legacy and commitment to Singapore.
 - c. Against the odds facing a small, fledging nation, we secured water, food, jobs, housing, and quality education for our people.
 - d. In the crucible of nation building, we forged a deep trust with fellow Singaporeans.
3. 70 years ago, our Party was set up by founding Secretary-General Lee Kuan Yew and his team with a clear Mission: To build a fair and just society for all.
 - a. This has guided us over the years and remains our Mission today.
 - b. To achieve this, successive generations of our comrades have toiled with deep conviction and dedication.
 - c. In fact, over 15 terms of Government!
 - d. Comrades, we must cherish the trust that Singaporeans have placed in us with great responsibility and humility.

- e. Let our core values of justice, equality, racial harmony, integrity and incorruptibility guide us.
 - f. Even at times, and especially at times, when this is not easy.
4. This year, we successfully completed the third handover of the Premiership since Singapore's independence.
- a. Congratulations to comrade Deputy Sec-Gen Lawrence Wong on your appointment.
5. Today, it is fitting that we honour Sec-Gen Lee Hsien Loong's contributions.
- a. As Prime Minister, Sec-Gen steered Singapore through the Global Financial Crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - b. He led our development into a smart nation and a global city that connects Asia with the rest of the world.
 - c. And this is particularly challenging in more recent years, when big power contestation has intensified.
 - d. Our transformation efforts have positioned our companies and workers to seize new opportunities in the global economy.
 - e. And our relationship with the NTUC remains strong. In fact, stronger than ever.
 - f. Sec-Gen has shaped a caring and cohesive society to share the benefits of growth with all.
 - g. SkillsFuture, the Pioneer Generation Package, the Merdeka Generation Package, and ComCare reassure Singaporeans that we walk with them as they chase their dreams.
 - h. On behalf of the Party, and our comrades in Teck Ghee and Ang Mo Kio, thank you Sec-Gen for four decades of guidance, wisdom, and foresight!

6. Comrades, as we turn our eyes to the future, we see many challenges ahead.
 - a. The world is changing rapidly.
 - b. Geopolitical contestation is rising. Technological advances are disrupting businesses and jobs.
 - c. Many parts of the world, including Singapore, are ageing rapidly. Climate change is causing extreme weather events and rising sea levels.
 - d. People around the world are stressed over bread-and-butter issues like the cost of living, jobs and immigration.

7. Against these challenges, how can we reassure and encourage Singaporeans that the Party will continue to improve their lives and the lives of their children?
 - a. How can the Party remain responsive to the evolving aspirations of our people, and drive progress and inclusivity for all?
 - b. How can the Party nurture the leadership to guide Singapore into the future?

8. Deputy Sec Gen Lawrence Wong led the #refreshPAP exercise to explore these questions.
Over 2,300 activists and partners stepped forward!
 - a. The message is clear.
 - b. The PAP must continue to represent all Singaporeans - even as we deepen our connection with the new generation of voters.

9. In the past year, our comrades have worked hard to respond to concerns on the ground.
 - a. We launched the PAP Mental Health Group and the new PAP Climate Action Group, with strong support by our Young PAP.
 - b. Our Women's Wing has championed women's health and development.
 - c. Our PAP Seniors Group introduced the PAPSG Playbook to strengthen community support for seniors.
 - d. Our PAP Malay Affairs Bureau (MAB) and MAB Muda have advocated for the evolving needs and concerns of our Malay Muslim community.

- e. And our PAP Policy Forum (PPF) dialogues remain a platform for the Party to co-develop practical solutions with Singaporeans.
10. These are all important initiatives that will take us “Forward Together” - the theme for this year’s Conference.
- a. But comrades, I cannot emphasise this enough.
 - b. You are the foundation of our Party’s mission to serve our people – to build a fair and just society.
 - c. You are our eyes and ears on the ground to understand the concerns and aspirations of our people.
 - d. Where difficult decisions must be taken for Singapore’s long-term benefit, you are the voice to explain the challenges we face and the options that we have.
 - e. The actions of each and every one of you enable us to win the hearts and minds of Singaporeans.
 - f. So comrades, I salute you for 70 years of trust, dedication and hard work. Thank you.
11. Tonight, we recognise 448 Party comrades who have served with distinction and dedication.
- a. Each of you has dedicated yourself and served our people in your special way.
 - b. We will present 10 categories of medals – to recognise long and dedicated service, and contributions by our PAP Youth, Women and Seniors.
 - c. Let me highlight a few examples to illustrate the common thread of exemplary service, and inspire us all.
12. Comrade Dr S Vasoo has served the communities in Ang Mo Kio, Tiong Bahru and Tanjong Pagar for 40 years.
- a. A social worker by training, Dr Vasoo was dedicated to uplifting low-income families, and is affectionately known as the “poor man’s MP”.

- b. Till today, he is a stalwart in Teck Ghee Division helping to strengthen the community and improve the lives of residents.
 - c. Today, we honour Comrade Dr S Vasoo with the Meritorious Service Star Medal. Congratulations Dr Vasoo!
13. Comrade Fu Chuan San demonstrates that true dedication knows no age.
- a. In almost half a century of service to the community, she is perhaps best known as a champion for women activist and volunteers.
 - b. When the Party established the Women's Wing in 1989, she led and nurtured the Wing in her branch.
 - c. For her tireless service and dedication to the Party, Chuan San has been awarded the Dedicated Service Medal. Congratulations Chuan San!
14. At the other end of the age spectrum is Comrade Clarence Ching, who joined the PAP after completing his "O" Levels.
- a. With a passion for social mobility and giving hope to all, he serves today as the Young PAP regional Chair for Tanjong Pagar GRC.
 - b. Clarence also founded Access Singapore, a social mobility charity which provides career opportunities to disadvantaged students.
- Congratulations Clarence on receiving the Bronze Medal and Youth Medal. Now with this loud cheer, we look forward to many more years of service from you!
15. It is against the dark sky that stars shine brightest, and Comrade Sa'adiyah Binte Abdul is a shining star who has served the Kaki Bukit community for 17 years.
- a. Serving in an Opposition ward brings its challenges, but Sa'adiyah has remained steadfast in supporting Kaki Bukit residents.
 - b. As a PAP Women's Wing (WW) Exco Member and Wing Chair at her Branch, she works closely with Branch Chair Shamsul Kamar to engage the community.
 - c. Thank you Sa'adiyah, and congratulations on your Silver Medal!

16. My fellow comrades, the PAP counts on you to serve Singapore and Singaporeans well.
 - a. Comrades Dr Vasoo, Chuan San, Clarence and Sa'adiah show us how individual actions can make a difference to many.
17. As Chairman, I am honoured to be part of the team leading the Party and Singapore forward.
 - a. We have continued to make good progress in uplifting our people and advancing Singapore's interests.
 - b. I just returned from a working trip to the US and the Republic of Korea.
 - c. It is remarkable that so many people I met expressed admiration for the ability of our government to solve critical problems, and to plan ahead.
 - d. But with the more challenging external environment, we must continue to work hard, work smart, and rise to the challenges ahead.
18. The starting point is to strengthen our internal cohesion, and bring all Singaporeans together to chart our future.
 - a. Since 2022, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong has led the Forward Singapore exercise to engage Singaporeans and refresh our social compact.
 - b. Similarly, through the #refreshPAP exercise, we have actively listened to our activists and partners to chart the way forward as a Party.
19. Let us support Prime Minister and Deputy Sec-Gen Lawrence Wong in rallying our party members and fellow Singaporeans to take Singapore Forward.
 - a. Let us rally support, win trust, and earn a strong mandate in the coming General Election.
 - b. With a strong mandate, we can bring Singaporeans together, and take Singapore forward together.
 - c. And let us remember that our core values remain as relevant now as when the Party was founded.
 - d. Let us live up to our name as a Party of Action, by Singaporeans for Singaporeans.

e. Let us build a Singapore of hope and opportunity for our children and the generations to come.

20. Thank you all for your service and dedication!

21. Majulah PAP! Majulah Singapura!