

**EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY**

**SPEECH BY MR HENG SWEE KEAT, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AT THE VALEDICTORY DINNER FOR MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT CLASS OF 2011, ON WEDNESDAY, 4 JANUARY 2012, 6.30PM AT THE SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, CASUARINA / ACACIA BALLROOM, LEVEL 1**

Your Excellency, Mr Wei Wei,  
Ambassador, Embassy of People's Republic of China,

Dr. Wang Xintang,  
Deputy Director General, Central Organization Department of China,

Professor Tan Chorh Chuan  
President, National University of Singapore,


Prof Wang Gungwu,  
Chairman, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy Governing Board,

Professor Bernard Yeung,  
Dean, NUS Business School,

Professor Kishore Mahbubani,  
Dean, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy,

Distinguished Guests, Professors and Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

 Good evening.



1 It gives me great pleasure to join all of you here today at the Valedictory Dinner for Master in Public Administration and Management (MPAM) Class of 2011 at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP).

## **Vision of MPAM Programme**

2 Let me first congratulate all of you from the Class of 2011 for successfully graduating from the programme, after ten months of hard work. Tonight also marks a special milestone for all of you as you return to the workplace to take on positions of greater responsibility in the coming years.

3 Like all good public policy education, the MPAM programme provides a framework to enable students to do in-depth analysis of the issues, to consider the interests and perspectives of all parties affected and to decide and act on what is in the best collective interests. It teaches students to recognise the need to anticipate and adapt to changing conditions and circumstances, and be innovative in resolving new challenges. The programme also instils in students the need to preserve citizens' confidence in the future through the ability to distil principles and practices that can lead to sustainable development and progress for the country. In this regard, learning from the experiences of other countries provides a rich set of perspectives.

4 The MPAM programme is designed to be rigorous, and is special in combining both public policy and business management. Although the two disciplines have different orientation, they are important complements in the formulation and implementation of policies. I hope you find your exposure to a wide variety of public policy and management theories useful. I am happy to note that in the past year, Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, CEOs of government linked companies, and former civil servants have addressed the class on various issues in Singapore's economic development and public management. You also had many interactions with Singapore civil servants and public officials during your attachment to 36 government ministries and statutory boards. I hope that the discussions and interactions have given you rich and broad perspectives that you may find useful when formulating and implementing

policies. At the same time, I am sure that our officials would have learnt many valuable lessons from you.

### **Coping with Uncertainties**

5 I believe the lessons you learnt and the reflections you made during the course of the programme will serve you well especially in these challenging times, given the current uncertainty in the global economic and financial situation. Concerns about fiscal sustainability on both sides of the Atlantic have dampened growth prospects and investment appetites. Heightened sovereign risk in the Eurozone is having a far-reaching effect on not just the financial markets but also on global economic activity. Asia will not be immune to these potentially severe effects. For example, economic growth in Singapore is expected to slow to 1% to 3% in 2012 largely because of expected weak global demand.

6 How much we can limit the impact of these forces on the economy and society will depend, to some extent, on how governments in Asia and the world formulate and implement effective policies to maintain stability in the financial markets, facilitate greater trade, create more jobs and establish social structures to help those affected by the crisis.

7 China is undergoing a most exciting phase in your history. The growth in the last few decades has been unprecedented; and the progress and development of the country in various fields have been breathtaking. The challenges are many and varied, but so are the opportunities. As senior officials, you will have a key role to play in shaping the development of not only your country, but beyond. As China continues to grow, it will play an increasingly important leadership role in the global arena. Within Asia, the dynamism of our region provides us with opportunities to deepen bilateral and regional cooperation, while maintaining our global orientation. There are many fora now for such cooperation, including those between ASEAN and China, and the

broader Asia Pacific such as APEC. As senior officials, you will be playing a key role not just in the development of China, but also the region.

### **Enhancing Bilateral Ties**

8 The MPAM programme was borne from a framework agreement to establish exchange programmes with middle to senior level officials from both countries. This programme is testament to the excellent bilateral relationship between Singapore and China, and I hope that this programme will facilitate more exchanges between officials and academics from both countries. In the coming years, China's experience will offer many insights for Singapore. There will be much that we can learn from you.

### **Conclusion**

9 Once again, my heartiest congratulations to the MPAM Class of 2011 and my best wishes for your future careers. I hope Singapore has left you with fond memories, and you will always cherish the friendship with the people of Singapore.

Thank you.

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