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Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY DR RICHARD HU, MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND

MP FOR KRETA AYER-TANGLIN GRC AT THE CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATES PRESENTATION CEREMONY
HELD ON

FRIDAY, 18 JUNE 1999 AT 8.00 PM AT THE KRETA AYER COMMUNITY CENTRE

Good Evening,

Mr Andy Gan

Chairman of Potong Pasir CDC &

Advertiser to Potong Pasir Grassroots Organisations

Distinguished Guests

New Citizens

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am indeed pleased to be able to join you this evening for the Citizenship
Certificates Presentation Ceremony for Central Singapore District to welcome the new
Singaporeans to our country. To the new citizens, I would like to congratulate you

for choosing Singapore as your HOME, a place where you will feel you belong, secure to live in and raise your children with confidence in the future. Singapore is a multi-racial society where there is equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, language or religion. We owe our security, social stability and economic success to the harmonious relations among the different races which make up Singapore.

2 In the next century, Singapore will face two major challenges. Firstly, we will see strong competition from an increasingly globalised economy. Secondly, our population will begin to age rapidly. Against this background, all Singaporeans will have to work together to build a strong and cohesive society in order to face these challenges.

3 Singapore is a small country with no natural resources. Its people are its only and most important resource. Every Singapore citizen is an asset, whatever his or her background, and has ability to contribute to our society and economy. I would therefore urge all individuals to strive to do their best to reach their full potential. Every Singaporean matters. Singapore has a place for everyone. It is a place where every citizen can find promise and fulfilment.

4 We are fortunate that in Singapore today, family ties remain strong and provide us with the foundation for building a better Singapore. But we cannot afford to be complacent. Mindful of the great social and economic changes which will overtake us in the 21st century, we must do all we can to strengthen family ties as it is the glue which holds our society together.

5 The more we move toward regionalisation and internationalism, the more important it is for us to have a strong national heartbeat. Regardless of where you are, be it at home or overseas, we must develop stronger bonds of belonging and commitment to our country, Singapore. We should feel passionately for Singapore because this is where our roots are and where our future will be.

6 Singaporeans are well known for their participation in nation building, whether it is through national service or voluntary involvement in community and welfare activities. However, because of the social and economic changes foreseen, there is even greater need today for our citizens to play a more active part in community and civic affairs and to work towards building the kind of Singapore that we want in the future.

7 For a start, I would suggest that you get to know your community by involving yourself in local community based organisations such as the Residents' Committees, Citizens' Consultative Committees, and the Central Singapore Community Development Council. These organisations were set up with the aim of promoting social cohesion and fostering community bonding. I believe some grassroots leaders are present this evening to share with you some of the activities organised by the Grassroots Organisations. By volunteering, you will find joy in not only meeting more people and making new friends, but also developing a sense of self-fulfilment and ownership for the community in which you live.

8 We need to grow our roots deep into our nation and to see ourselves as

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"Singaporean" and not primarily as Indians, Chinese, Malays or Eurasians. I have every confidence that you will be able to contribute to your community and do Singapore proud. I wish each and everyone of you here this evening the best in your new life in Singapore and let us live and work together to make Singapore our best HOME.

Thank you.

National Archives of Singapore