

# *Singapore Government*

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Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 140 Hill Street #02-02 MITA Building  
Singapore 179369. Tel: 837 9666

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### **SPEECH BY PRESIDENT S R NATHAN AT THE GRAND FINALE OF NATIONAL CAMP 2000 ON SUNDAY 13 AUGUST 2000 AT 10.00 AM AT SARIMBUN SCOUT CAMP**

Minister Teo Chee Hean and Mrs Teo  
Distinguished Guests,  
Boys and Girls,

My wife and I are happy to join you this morning for the Grand Finale of the National Camp 2000. As the Camp draws to a close, I am certain that many, if not all of you, are experiencing very different feelings from the ones you had three days ago, when you started this Camp.

2 Four days ago, we celebrated our 35th National Day. I am happy and thankful that despite the odds we faced, we have become what we are today – a people with hope and confidence for the future, good homes for our families, a sense of peace and security, reinforced by a strong defence force and a united people. We have made progress in our 35 years of nation-building. Where we go from here will be for people of your generation to make of it. But the fundamentals will remain relevant – meritocracy; a capable and clean Government; investing in our people to help each one realise his potential; a united and cohesive

people; and strong families and values which will anchor us in the midst of changes in lifestyles and work-patterns.

3     ***“Building Tomorrow Today”*** is the theme for this year’s National Camp. You have been fortunate in not having to grow up with the deprivation of war or during the times of struggle and tribulation in our early days of Independence. Unlike you, those of us who have gone through such days have grown up with a heightened sense of bonding with each other, and a valuable shared experience as a people and nation.

4     While these experiences of our history cannot be re-created, I hope that you will find the experiences that you have gone through in this Camp, with fellow young Singaporeans, working together as a team, a valuable experience. You would have discovered that you could solve problems more effectively by working as a team, rather than just as individuals. These are important lessons in life that will not only be helpful to you as individuals in future, but also help develop that social cohesion so crucial for our future as a nation. And developing social cohesion is one foundation that we must actively build up today, for a secure tomorrow.

5     The Camp’s theme also presupposes the need to prepare our future generation to face any combination of possible evolving scenarios. As the world evolves into a global village, economies, jobs and careers will undergo continuous change. Like all others in the world, we too will have to face up to such changes and seek opportunities for ourselves. Our youths will need to be equipped not just with the necessary knowledge, but also with critical life-skills. Your ability to think critically and innovatively, to communicate clearly and accurately and to work as a team, and above all, developing the passion to discover new insights, new solutions to problems and the constant desire to improve on another person’s ideas, are some of these important life-skills. They will stand you in good stead and give you the capacity to respond nimbly to the future environment of constant and rapid change.

6     The National Camp therefore aims at taking learning beyond the school environment. You have been challenged in obstacle events and in games which required initiative and teamwork. As you went through those activities, I hope that

you were consciously thinking about *how* you were going to get through them rather than merely concentrating on completing them. This is because the process of solving these problems, or understanding why the problem did not get solved or why a solution was defective, is often of greater learning value than just finding the right answers to the problem.

7 Three days ago, when you started on this Camp, some of you may have been apprehensive – wondering if you would be able to complete the activities. Some would have been self-conscious in the presence of so many unfamiliar faces; others, none too comfortable in the new surroundings. Today, as I look around, I am glad to see so many young people exuding a newly-found confidence. I am even happier to witness such warm camaraderie among you. It is my hope that these feelings, and new friendships you have acquired, will remain with you long after you leave this camp.

8 Lastly, may I congratulate each and every one of you for having successfully completed this Camp. I hope that your participation in the activities in this National Camp has enriched you and provided you with valuable opportunities to stretch and discover yourselves. And I hope that this experience will spur you to participate in more of such challenging activities in the near future.

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