

**OPENING ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION,
MR EDDIE TEO AT THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARD CEREMONY ON 20 JULY 2016 AT GRAND COPTHORNE
WATERFRONT HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM**

Deputy Prime Minister Mr Teo Chee Hean, Minister in charge of the Civil Service,
Coordinating Minister for National Security

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Good evening. Welcome to the 2016 Public Service Commission Scholarships Award Ceremony. Congratulations to the 73 PSC scholarship holders this year. And thank you to all your families, principals and teachers who have devoted their time, energy and care to supporting and developing you over the years.

2. This year, we received over 2,700 applications for the PSC and Ministry Scholarships, a five-year high and a 13% increase from last year. This indicates that despite all the other options they have, young Singaporeans still aspire to take an active role in shaping the future of Singapore by pursuing a Public Service career. For Singapore to continue to advance and prosper, it is vital that the Public Service remains as an appealing career option for a future generation of Singaporeans.

Looking beyond Academic Qualifications

3. PSC Scholarships are awarded based on merit. Merit is not high academic qualifications. We award scholarships to people whom we assess to have the

character, aptitude and ability to perform the job, regardless of background or socio-economic status. The qualities deemed essential for good public servants have changed over the years. For instance, today's civil servants are expected not just to draft clear and sensible policies for the common good, but also to forge partnerships with citizens in co-creating those policies, and to communicate the policies to the public with clarity and empathy. So candidates with perfect grades may not make good public officers. Conversely, we have excellent public officers who did not score perfect grades. Academic ability alone would not have gotten you here today. Beyond academic results, each of you demonstrated core attributes that the PSC holds to be essential to the Public Service. The PSC believes that all of you possess integrity, empathy, leadership, a passion and commitment to serve Singaporeans and to contribute to the progress of Singapore.

A Diverse Leadership Corps for the Public Service

4. As Singapore's demands and challenges shift, we need different types of leaders with a diverse range of skills and perspectives, who will form a strong leadership team for the Public Service. I am thus pleased to see in our scholarship holders a range of different interests and backgrounds. The PSC continues to be supportive of sending our scholarship holders to good universities in a variety of countries around the world.

5. This year, Miss Nur Sabrina Bte Mohamed Yusoff, will be pursuing Psychology at the University of Melbourne – the first PSC scholarship recipient in nine years to head to Australia. She had participated in the French Immersion Programme and was both a member of the Malay Language Drama and Debate

Society as well as the English Drama Club in school. I am confident that Sabrina will integrate her inclinations in cultures and languages with her experience in Australia and bring back unique perspectives when she starts work in the Public Service.

6. Our scholarship holders also come from a range of different educational backgrounds. We have with us today, Mr Daniel Ho Jing Yang and Mr William Tan Jing Yu from Singapore Polytechnic, Miss Jean Chia Wei Lin from Ngee Ann Polytechnic as well as Miss Rachel Chew Min Qi from School of the Arts (SOTA).

7. The PSC is constantly looking to supply the areas of need in the Public Service. We need both generalists and specialists to better cater to the wide-ranging needs of Singaporeans and Singapore, tackle policy deadlocks and improve the quality of public services. Alongside generalist leaders, we also need engineers, data analysts and other technical leaders in order to devise technically sound and integrated solutions for our nation. For those who would like to deepen your professional development in your area of specialisation, the Service will support your aspirations and aptitude. Under the Public Service Leadership Programme (PSLP) which spans the Public Service, you can be ear-marked to join specific agencies which are aligned to your skills and interest. This year, we have 13 scholarship holders pursuing studies in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields. We hope to see more in the years to come.

Benefits of Local University Education

8. This year, a significant number of candidates at PSC interviews expressed their desire to study locally. While an overseas education has its rewards of broadening perspectives and offering a cosmopolitan experience, our local universities offer comparable academic rigour. In the latest Times Higher Education

Report, NUS and NTU were ranked first and second respectively in Asia. Local institutions also provide close proximity to the community and ground sentiments. For the 13 scholarship holders who will be pursuing your studies in Singapore, please take this opportunity to cultivate a habit of listening to what people say about life, the issues that concern them, and the problems they face, as understanding ground sentiments is critical to the work of a public officer.

Conclusion

9. In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to again thank the principals and teachers who have worked closely with us. We greatly value your partnership in reaching out to your students and encouraging them to consider a career in the Public Service. I would also like to thank the families for their invaluable support.

10. To our new scholarship holders, please take every opportunity to widen your worldview as you embark on this new phase in life. You will be in the best universities in the world. So make the most of your undergraduate experience, both academic and non-academic. By all means become master of your subject of study, but more importantly, grow as a person. Adopt an open attitude and be receptive to constructive criticism that comes your way. Make friends for yourselves and for Singapore. Continuously seek personal improvements and prepare yourself for your role as public officers. Stay connected to Singapore and think deeply about your country and its future. Above all, stay true to your values and your commitment to serve Singapore through public service.

11. I am confident that you will do us all proud, and I look forward to learning of your future contributions to Singapore.

12. Once again, my warmest congratulations.

13. Thank you.

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