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SPEECH BY MR HO KAH LEONG, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(EDUCATION), AT THE NATIONAL DAY DINNER IN LENG KEE
CONSTITUENCY AT LENG KEE COMMUNITY CENTRE ON
FRIDAY, 5 AUGUST 1983 AT 8.00 PM

This evening, we are gathered here to celebrate our 18th National Day. We are in a joyous mood and feel proud to be citizens of Singapore. We sincerely hope to be able to maintain our prosperity and bright future.

We feel proud of our nation because in the past 18 years of independence, she has made tremendous progress in terms of political and economic advancement, education, social services, housing, etc. Most important of all, we have established political stability which ensures the continued growth of our economy. With economic growth, our people are assured of a relatively high standard of living.

The factors leading to political stability are varied. Besides having a strong political party in power, and sound government policies made in the interests of the people, we also have the contributions of the various grassroot organisations. All these are important factors contributing to political stability.

It can be said that Singapore is unique to have grassroot organisations such as the Citizens' Consultative Committees (CCCs), Community Centre Management Committees (CCMCs) and Resident Committees (RCs). The main function of these organisations is to provide a dialogue between the government and the people so that government policies can be widely understood by the people and the reaction to these

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policies can be fed back to the government. Being a government subject to a fresh mandate from the people every five years, its policies must be in the interests of the majority of the people as well as in the long term interest of the country. Feedback from grassroots is important to enable government policies to be correctly formulated and smoothly implemented.

Although the main objectives of the CCCs, CCMCs and RCs are identical in some respects each organisation has its particular functions to perform. The CCC is the supreme body of a constituency. It looks after matters that affect the livelihood of the people of the whole constituency. The CCMC looks after the Community Centre under its charge and plans out activities in the interests of the residents. The RC's main purpose is to promote good neighbourliness. It looks after the interests of the residents within its own zone.

The members in these grassroot organisations serve purely in a voluntary capacity. Just as the community leaders of this constituency, they have to sacrifice their time, make monetary contributions, withstand critical remarks from unkind residents in order to serve the people well. Many community leaders serve in not just one but other organisations as well. If the work of CCCs, CCMCs and RCs can be well coordinated, then duplication of work can be avoided and better results can be achieved through concerted efforts by all concerned. In this respect, I must commend Leng Kee Constituency for setting up a coordination committee which meets every three months to coordinate the activities in the constituency. This is a very good system and should serve as a good example for other constituencies. I am confident that the community leaders of Leng Kee will make further contributions towards community development of the constituency.

Let us all hope that our nation will continue to progress from strength to strength. #####