

SPEECH BY MR. ONG SOO CHUAN, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & MP FOR NEE SOON,
AT THE 11TH NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION AND CHARITY SHOW
ORGANISED BY THE ST. JOHN'S AMBULANCE OF AHMAD IBRAHIM
SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR THE OLD PEOPLE OF 8 HOMES OF THE
AGED TO BE HELD ON FRIDAY, 6 AUGUST 1976 AT 10.00 A.M.
AT THE SCHOOL HALL

The quality of the civilisation of a country depends on the way life is lived. This quality is manifested in the objectives and actions of the citizens and government in that country. The quality of life again depends on a balanced body, mind and spirit in her people. To survive, we must keep this balance. To progress, we must improve it.

The Government has set its priorities to continuously improve the quality of life in Singapore. This can be achieved by economic development and by uplifting the social and moral character of the people.

Economic development can be intensified by planning with supportive elements, such as, a skilled and disciplined workforce, promoting harmonious relations with other countries, developmental infrastructure and financial support.

I wish to emphasize that the benefits of economic development can only be meaningful if citizens are of good character, sensitive and responsive to the welfare of fellow-citizens particularly those who are less fortunate. Good character is human nature in its best form. It is moral order embodied in the individual. Citizens of good character are not only the conscience of society but in every well-governed state, they are its best motive power. The development of good character must begin with the youth. The schools and teachers have a decisive role to play. I am therefore encouraged by this act of social consciousness by the students of Ahmad Ibrahim School. This laudable service by your students to 200 elderly citizens is motivated by the virtues of compassion, selflessness and benevolence.

The comforts of life offered by society today are the direct result of contributions of the elderly citizens of Singapore. It is they who, many years ago, arrived in a scarcely developed island and built it into a prosperous and thriving nation. It is only right therefore that the younger generation should show their appreciation and provide comfort to these people in their old age.

The moral and social values shown by students of Ahmad Ibrahim School are the values the Government wish to inculcate among the youth. It is reassuring to note that these fine moral qualities are present in your youths who, comprising more than half of our population, will shape the future Singapore. We must persist in our efforts to enhance this social awareness and consciousness in our young Singaporeans who would be parents in the future.

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