

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR CHAN GHEE SENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE  
SINGAPORE ACTION GROUP OF ELDERS (SAGE) AT THE SAGE CONFERENCE  
ROOM, BLOCK ONE PODIUM, 2ND FLOOR, MAUDE ROAD, SINGAPORE 0820  
ON SUNDAY, 22 JULY 79 AT 2.30 PM

Although the Singapore Action Group of Elders (SAGE) cannot be said to have come of age yet, there is no doubt that it has made a strong impact in Singapore. It was a pioneer effort which was made to provide a centre for our senior citizens to get together. Through the varied activities of SAGE, there is now better understanding of our senior citizens and their needs.

The Aged should be allowed to determine their own lives

SAGE has been able to obtain greater awareness of what society should accept as principles of care for the aged. First of all, the aged should live and function as normal citizens in normal conditions. They should not be treated as a generation apart and, therefore, be isolated from the community. The senior citizens should also be able to determine their own lives in the best way that they feel should be lived. Things should not be decided for them but of course they should be assisted to lead as normal a life as possible bearing in mind their age and disabilities, if any. Thus, SAGE fulfills its role of providing a centre which has activities to make old age a graceful way of living.

For those senior citizens who have no means of visible support, there are welfare services to care for them. For those who are living with their families or living on their own but are able to look after themselves without depending on social services, SAGE and other similar organisations provide the focal point for them to meet and share in some common activities.

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SAGE should consider new areas of activities

There is still much that SAGE can do. We should not be content with what we are doing but should consider what new activities and directions can be undertaken to improve the services that we provide for our senior citizens. One area which can possibly be pursued is the question of providing housing facilities for those who do not want to stay in welfare homes. There are increasingly a number of senior citizens who have the means to live on their own. However, as they grow older, they need attention to assist them to live on their own. Certain facilities will also have to be provided for such senior citizens. Perhaps, developers or even the authorities can consider a sort of complex for pensioners where special facilities are provided at a cost. Such complexes are common in other countries but have yet to take root in Singapore.

All of us who are associated with SAGE should work harder through the years to extend the activities of SAGE. With this, I wish the Association all the best and hope that it will mature with age.

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