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Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR CH'NG JIT KOON, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER, AT THE NATIONAL DAY
OBSERVANCE CEREMONY AT MITSUBISHI SINGAPORE HEAVY
INDUSTRIES LTD, NO 50 GUL ROAD
ON WEDNESDAY, 10 AUG 83, AT 7.45 AM**

It is my privilege to be here this morning to commemorate together with you our Republic's 18th Anniversary in this simple but meaningful observance ceremony.

It is most appropriate that we should take some time off from work to reflect on the significance of our National Day. It is not just a day of rejoicing, but an occasion for us to reaffirm our loyalty and dedication to our country.

As you all know, the two factors for Singapore's success are, namely, an honest, far-sighted, and pragmatic political leadership and a hardworking and disciplined population. Our years of hardwork coupled with political stability have brought us economic prosperity. But how can we ensure that this will continue? How do we make sure that we will continue to achieve what we aspire for?

The answer to these questions lies in ourselves, in whether we have the will, the desire and the guts not only to work well and hard but also to learn and train to work better and harder. Upgrading of skills and learning new skills is necessary if we are to attain greater heights of achievement. Advanced technology by itself

will not significantly increase productivity if we do not know how or are unable to handle properly the sophisticated machineries that are installed to increase production. This is why our Government places great importance on the training and retraining of workers as shown by the setting up of the Skills Development Fund. At the same time, the NTUC has also embarked on a massive training programme, popularly known as the BEST programme to equip workers with at least a basic education. I urge those workers who do not have a chance to undergo basic education in their younger days to make full use of such training facilities. In fact, it is not only this group of workers who need the training. To keep Singapore going, all of us should commit ourselves to the learning of new skills or upgrading of our level of skills.

But it is not enough for us to be educated and skilled. For Singapore to survive, we must be adaptable and possess the desire to strive for the best. We must aim for work excellence in whatever we do. The need to remain competitive in the international market is most vital in the case of Singapore, a tiny country with an insignificant area of 617.9 sq km and with no other natural resources except its 2.5 million people. Plain common sense tells us that in order to survive, we would have to be most efficient in the use of the only natural resource we have. Let us all work harder and better to achieve higher productivity and greater efficiency in order that we and our families can continue to enjoy a better standard of living in the years ahead.

May I wish you a very happy National Day and every success in your endeavours.

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