

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR WAN HUSSIN ZOOHRI, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(HEALTH AND CULTURE), AT THE NATIONAL DAY DINNER
AT KAMPONG UBI CONSTITUENCY
ON SUNDAY, 12 AUGUST 1984 AT 8.00 PM**

On an occasion like this, it is only natural that we should rejoice. But at the same time we should also ponder and take stock of ourselves.

In the last 25 years of nation-building, we have seen many changes taking place. Singapore has been transformed into a metropolis. The people are enjoying a good standard of living. The environment is clean and green. In short, the physical and material developments have been tremendous.

However, in the midst of our rapid social change, we have lagged behind in certain areas. They have made our social change somewhat lop-sided and less balanced. These are in the areas of social grace, cultural appreciation and moral values.

Singaporeans, living in a compact urban environment, conditioned by the hustle and bustle of city life, and the business-oriented mentality seem to lack the social finesse in their social interactions. There are Singaporeans who appear self-centred, selfish and individualistic, while others are unconcerned, curt and discourteous. We need the Courtesy Campaign to remind us of these shortcomings. We also have the Residents' Committees acting as social lubricant to smoothen the "rough edges" in the socialisation process within the housing estates.

Culturally, we are a polyglot society. We need to refocus our cultural perspective. We need to strengthen our cultural roots and at the same time appreciate the higher cultures of other societies. We would like to have Singaporeans who not only appreciate western concerts, dramas and operas but who also feel and appreciate equally well their own ethnic plays, 'wayangs' and 'sandiwaras'. This mosaic in our cultural heritage would open our mental horizon to the universality in the cultural traditions of our different ethnic groups.

As for moral values they also need re-examination. The advent of what is termed as "counter-culture" should be resisted. The cult of the hedonist must be guarded against. The overpowering materialistic attitude and environment would eclipse the vision of the unwary who would place pleasure and enjoyment above everything else.

We should not lose sight of the reasons and ingredients that contributed to our present affluence. This is achieved not out of accident or some good fortune. It is because of our good leadership, social discipline, hardworking population and, a fair and just system of rewards. We therefore, need to maintain and strengthen our moral fibre of diligence, honesty and integrity in our march towards greater prosperity.

In spite of our shortcomings in this 25 years of nation-building, Singaporeans have much to be proud of. Our success is a shining example to others. We should therefore protect our assets and heritage unreservedly. The young and the old should stand united in the defence of our country. Our diversity is the strength of our unity. As Singaporeans and as a nation, we cherish our own way of life. We would not trade this Singaporean way of life for anything else. Let us carve our future in the same Singaporean spirit as we have done in the past 25 years.

Let us stand up for Singapore.

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