

Dedicated leadership, teamwork to remain important 50 years from now: Ong Ye Kung

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While no one can visualise what the future holds 50 years from now, several elements are unlikely to change, said Acting Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) Ong Ye Kung to about 300 students and young working adults at the Think Future Forum finale's and youth dialogue on Saturday (May 14).

He added that these include Singapore's small size and the hard work needed to maintain its strong capabilities, and also the need for dedicated leadership and teamwork among the Republic's people.

"We must continue to have people like (Finance) Minister Heng (Swee Keat) - that kind of dedication and hard work, and that will see us through any hardship that comes our way. And when times are bad, we must have the teamwork to pull together to overcome difficulties," said Mr Ong. "I think these won't change, and I hope SG100, these will continue to be our traits."

The forum is part of the second phase of the SG100 Conversations On Measures of Progress for our Aspirational Singapore Society initiative (SG100 COMPASS). Under the initiative, youths are invited to envisage a common vision, policy ideas and action plans to steer Singapore into its 100th year of independence.

Youth groups presented their policy proposals to Mr Ong and expert panellists, including deputy director at the Institute of Policy Studies Gillian Koh, and Mediacorp's Head of Family (English) and Premier segments Debra Soon.

These include ideas on how to recognise and encourage people to care and take action in community service, ways to encourage bonding between families and communities through housing policies, and how to lift the productivity of Singapore's small and medium enterprises.

Mr Ong, who was standing in for Mr Heng at the forum, also quoted from a speech that Mr Heng had prepared for delivery at the event. Mr Heng had dared youths to be GOOD - which stands for "Global, Outstanding, Ownership and Deliver", he said.

"He (Mr Heng) said many of you will aspire towards overseas exposure, be it in financial capital of London or in the technological capital of Silicon Valley. In fact, opportunities of the future will not be far from us - much of this would be sprouting in our regional backyard," said Mr Ong, adding that East Asia and the Pacific alone accounted for two-fifths of global growth in 2015.

Mr Ong said Mr Heng also dared youths to have the stamina and tenacity to re-imagine and reinvent themselves in the face of more setbacks than successes, and to take ownership of not just individual successes, but "as a society we must affirm our purpose and take ownership of the future of our country".

"It is how we contribute to resolving challenges in our society, and expand opportunities for all and make this country a home. We all have a stake in creating meaningful roles for ourselves and those around us," said Mr Ong.

On daring youths to deliver, Mr Heng felt it was different from the previous three because it signifies action. "He said 'I will challenge you to carry your knowledge and experience further, to take up ownership of your country and deliver,'" said Mr Ong.

Mr Ong also launched "Act Future", the third part of the SG100 Compass initiative, with activities planned from July.