

## **PM Lee's swearing-in address highlights sense of renewed purpose: Analysts**

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Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's speech at the Cabinet swearing-in ceremony on Thursday (Oct 1) reflected a sense of renewed purpose, and was "upbeat" and "inspirational", according to political analysts Channel NewsAsia spoke with.

They added that the speech also spells out a longer-term vision for Singapore, compared to the 2011 swearing-in address, where the mood reflected a need to focus on resolving issues such as housing and immigration.

Observers noted that Mr Lee's speech highlighted a sense of purpose and mission for the new Government, especially when it comes to leadership renewal.

"His speech last evening was a constant reiteration of leadership renewal and succession. Not just about putting newer and younger faces but getting this team ready for challenges ahead," said Professor Eugene Tan from Singapore Management University.

"He's acutely aware that fourth generation does not have that long gestation period that many of his colleagues and Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's cabinet had. So the task ahead is great. When we look at the overall context of the speech, renewal was something he wanted to continue to emphasise and I think in that was an appeal to Singaporeans to support that fourth generation."

Mr Lee's speech also focused on setting out the "next chapter" for Singapore. He spoke at length about the future economy, as well as lifelong learning and creating a more liveable city.

"There was a constant use of 'you' 'we' and 'us', talking about co-authorship of the Singapore story, the next lap," said Prof Tan. "All this indicated that over the last four to five years, the deep engagement has gone down well with Singaporeans, and so I think his Government will probably want to continue to build on that."

Mr Lee said the Government will roll out more focused discussions with the public on Singapore's future. These will build on the "Our Singapore Conversation" initiative announced in 2012. Professor Tan said "Our Singapore Conversation" had provided the government a good platform and experience in getting Singaporeans' views on policy matters.

Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies Dr Gillian Koh added that the conversations resulted from the 2011 General Election.

"While the Government might seem or feel it is well intentioned in the way it crafts policy, it must not lose touch of where people are at. So even when you talk about jobs and wages, it cannot be at a macro level where you say, 'How many jobs do we want and how many in which industry', but you have to go back down to the people whom you are creating those jobs for," she explained. "Do they want those jobs, do they feel excited about it? Do they feel they have skills for it? Or do they want to do something completely different? Where will the two meet?"

Dr Koh also said that Mr Lee's reference to the SG50 musical in his speech could illustrate the Government's acceptance of a diversity of voices.

"He talked about a community effort to put on a musical celebrating SG50," she said. "Everybody could choose their roles, they could express their creativity and their interests in different ways, but that it does add to one great project, one great outcome. That's the same way, and that there is no need for there to be group think, that there is one way ahead alone."

Dr Koh said there is a recognition that the strength in diversity, will pull the nation towards making Singapore special - a theme that Mr Lee has often emphasised.