

Professor Tommy Koh's opening remarks

Our beloved sixth president, Mr S R Nathan; Her Excellency Heather Grant, the High Commissioner of Canada; Mr David Carden, the former US ambassador to ASEAN; Members of the IPS family; Ladies and Gentlemen.

Ho Kwon Ping is the first individual to be awarded the S R Nathan Fellowship for the Study of Singapore. IPS established this Fellowship to promote greater academic discourse on Singapore-centric issues.

The Fellowship advances the Institute's three-fold mission, which are:

- (i) the researching and analysing of Singapore's policy issues and challenges;
- (ii) building bridges between thought leaders; and
- (iii) communicating the Institute's work to the wider public.

My colleague Arun Mahizhnan has summarised our mission as the ABC of IPS - A for analyses, B for bridge-building, and C for communication.

There is a growing culture of vibrant debate in Singapore – on how Singapore should be governed, on the Singapore identity, and on the relationship between state and society. We want the S R Nathan Fellow's ideas to further stimulate such thoughtful discussions. I hope that younger Singaporeans, especially students, who are worried about their future, will find the series of IPS-Nathan Lectures relevant, thought-provoking and reassuring.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we would not be here today without the kindness and generosity of individual and corporate donors, and grant-making institutions. To endow the fellowship, IPS raised around S\$3 million and when you add the matching grant from the government, we have raised a total of S\$5.9 million for the Fellowship. Several of our donors are here today – we have with us leaders from the Tote Board, Singapore Pools, the NTUC group, CapitaLand, and of course, our own Corporate Associates, who have been our steadfast supporters. I would like to record our deep gratitude to all of them, and also to Mr Kwee Liong Keng, Mr KC Chew who is with us, Mrs Goh Chok Tong and Mr Teo Soon Hoe for all their help they gave to the Institute in fundraising.

At this point in my script, Lynn has inserted "Prof's personal comments about Kwon Ping", and Kwon Ping was nervous earlier about what I'm going to say about him. I'm going to begin by saying that I'm a great admirer of Kwon Ping and of his lovely and talented wife, Claire Chiang. My pleasure in introducing Kwon Ping is enhanced by the fact that I was a friend and admirer of his late father, Ho Rih Hwa, and his late mother Li Lienfung. Mr Ho Rih Hwa was a very successful business leader and he had also served Singapore with great distinction as our ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand, to the UN in Geneva, to the Kingdom of Belgium, and to the European Economic Community. Kwon Ping's mother Li Lienfung was a very famous writer, and a patron of our artists, playwrights, and other cultural workers. I want to say to

Kwon Ping that he is a worthy son to these two distinguished parents. Ho Kwon Ping has excelled in all his professional endeavours – as a journalist, as a business leader, as a founding chairman of the Singapore Management University, and as a public intellectual. It is in this last capacity that he's been awarded the S R Nathan Fellowship.

The title of his lecture series is Singapore: The Next 50 Years. He has chosen to start the series by focusing, today, on the topic of "Politics and Governance". I'm confident that we will find his lecture a model of clarity, critical thinking, and eloquence. I also look forward to a thoughtful exchange of views during the Q&A session which will be moderated by the Institute's Director Janadas Devan. It now gives me very great pleasure to invite Mr Ho Kwon Ping to deliver his inaugural lecture.