

## **Pledging ourselves anew: Decide on how to build better country**

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The milestone of Singapore's 50th year of independence is an opportune time for renewing the pledge of building a better country, said Dr Kanwaljit Soin.

One way could be to increase citizen participation in governance, by opening up more avenues for civil society work and political engagement, the former president of the Association of Women for Action and Research suggested.

"Most of the community action has to do with voluntary work. What about advocacy?" she asked.

"They keep stressing that Singapore's your home because active participation in the country's decisions is not fully there."

Institute of Policy Studies senior research fellow Gillian Koh said Singapore's Golden Jubilee should be about both staying the course and exploring new approaches.

"If there's anything useful about that journey, you would want to recommit to doing those things," she said. "On the other hand, you might feel there are other ways to (achieve) a better future."

The bottom line for Mr Gan Thiam Poh, an MP for Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC, is that Singaporeans must commit to working together.

He said: "As a society, we have diverse interest groups.

"Everyone must recognise we are in a multi-religious, 'multi- everything' society, and stay close together."