

## **'Politics will have to involve people more'**

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In an age of diminishing trust in governments, Singapore may have to move from politics of conviction to politics of involvement, said former civil service head Lim Siong Guan.

He was speaking after his IPS-Nathan lecture last night, when he was asked if innovation should be initiated by the Government or the people.

His reply touched on the evolution of politics here. He noted that the People's Action Party Government has avoided a "politics of expedience".

"They don't do stuff simply because it's popular... but (are) prepared to do stuff which is very important for Singapore's survival and the success for the generations to come," he said.

This path - the politics of conviction - requires explaining to the people why the more difficult path is necessary, he noted.

But this form of politics may have been overtaken by the lower trust people have in governments generally, he said.

"The level of intrinsic trust has been somewhat diminished, not necessarily because of what the Government in Singapore itself has done, but I think this change is all over the world... where the population has a diminished trust in government."

He added: "It is not a case of no trust. It is a case of, we'd like very much to be able to trust, but the Government cannot simply say, 'This is my explanation.' "

This new era calls for politics of involvement, he said, adding: "We need to involve people in the process because people want to feel that they are shaping the future, or at least they've got a major part in influencing the future. This is a lot tougher."