

SCCCI Mid-Autumn Festival Celebrations 2015
Speech by President Thomas Chua
Date: 18 Sep 2015
Time: 7pm
SCCCI Auditorium

Honourable Minister Grace Fu

Excellencies

Senior government officials

Business and community leaders

Honorary Council Members, Council Members and members

Ladies and gentlemen

First of all, I would like to congratulate Minister Grace Fu for successfully defending her parliament seat in the recent General Election. 2015 is an important milestone in Singapore's history. Together we have celebrated the glorious achievements of Singapore's 50 years of nation-building; we have also voted in the leadership team for our nation. Given the positive outcome of the political election, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his team have again won the trust of the citizens to shoulder the responsibility of ruling the country. We look forward to having the new leadership team carry out this important responsibility and lead Singapore towards an even better future!

The Mid-Autumn Festival is a festival which celebrates reunion. At our annual gathering, we always present tertiary scholarships as an encouragement to outstanding students. Grooming talent for the nation and for society is a tradition for the Chamber. Many of our Chinese business pioneers upheld the spirit of giving back to society after they had accomplished business success. They established schools, and gave generously to charitable causes.

Allow me to share a heartwarming story with everyone. Tan Jun Rong, a graduate from the Singapore Management University, had received the Chamber's scholarship in 2010. Jun Rong is working now, and decided to donate \$5,000 back to the Chamber Foundation, requesting that this amount be disbursed by the Foundation to support his juniors in SMU. Since each SCCCF scholarship is currently worth \$10,000, we have decided after discussing it with Jun Rong to disburse it in the form of a Study Grant. Applications would be open to students from lower-income families and with excellent academic records. Jun Rong's gesture is indeed a most heartwarming and moving one.

A total of 22 undergraduates from Singapore's four universities, coming from Chinese, Malay and Indian ethnicities, are being awarded the SCCCF Scholarships today. The SCCCI has partnered MENDAKI and Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA) to offer joint scholarships; this also serves to promote multi-racial harmony and cohesion. While the scholarship scheme has been in place for many years, we have also made certain changes. For example, the National University of Singapore Chinese faculty is using the scholarship to support students who conduct research on pioneers, or to participate in exchange programmes in China. The research on pioneers is a way of passing on the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit, while the China exchange programmes can help to broaden visions and mindsets. These are all most laudable efforts.

Singapore is an open economy; we must always pay attention to the international environment, understanding international business and trade development, and establishing channels and capabilities in connecting with the external economy. In the following months, the Chamber will be organising three overseas missions in rapid succession. In the later part of September, the Chamber is bringing a large 116-member delegation to attend the 13th World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention in Indonesia. This globally acknowledged Chinese convention was conceptualised and first organised by the SCCCI.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Singapore's diplomatic relations with China. In October, the Chamber will be organising a business mission to Beijing and Tianjin to fulfil our role of being a bridge between Singapore and China. Even as we bring local businessmen to venture into China, we will also play our part in helping China enterprises to go global. As this year also coincides with the 50th Anniversary of Singapore's diplomatic relations with India, we are planning to form a delegation to visit India in November, to explore business opportunities and experience India's rich cultural heritage.

2015 is a new starting point for Singapore; let us embark on this new journey together. On this note, on behalf of the SCCCI, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Minister Grace Fu for joining us to celebrate Mid-Autumn. At the same time, I thank all members of the diplomatic corps, guests and friends for your participation. May you all have an enjoyable evening ahead!

Thank you!