

**SINGAPORE'S 59TH NATIONAL DAY DINNER
SPEECH BY SCCCI PRESIDENT KHO CHOON KENG
8 AUGUST 2024
THE RITZ-CARLTON, MILLENIA SINGAPORE**

Mr Chee Hong Tat, Minister for Transport and Second Minister for Finance,
Your Excellencies,
Senior Ministers of State,
Ministers of State,
Senior Parliamentary Secretaries,
Members of Parliament,
Senior Government Officials,
SCCCI Council Members and Members,
Leaders of Community Organisations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening!

1. It is a great honour to gather here tonight to celebrate Singapore's 59th National Day. On behalf of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCCI), I extend a warm welcome to all. I sincerely thank everyone for your support and for attending this meaningful dinner in the spirit of patriotism!
2. Over the past 59 years, with the foresight of our forefathers as well as the unity and hard work of all Singaporeans, Singapore has seized opportunities, leveraged its geographical advantage and talents, and transformed from a small island state with a lack of resources to a prosperous nation and an endearing home for all.
3. As we all know, people, economy, investment and infrastructure are Singapore's "hard power". Our clean and incorruptible government, fair system, racial harmony, high international reputation and the spirit of supporting the vulnerable and giving back to society are also our most valuable assets. This "soft power" or national spirit is built through educating generations of Singaporeans as well as their hard work and sacrifices. We should be proud of these achievements

and always bear them in mind. Our national spirit is also a powerful driving force for Singapore's continued success.

4. At the Singapore Apex Business Summit last month, Deputy Prime Minister Mr Heng Swee Keat launched the "Transforming the Singapore Economy" Report, highlighting Singapore's economic transformation efforts since 2016 that have grown the nation's economic pie. As the different sectors actively innovate, internationalise, develop new skills and build capabilities in sustainability, Singaporeans' productivity and income have gradually increased, and Singapore has maintained our position among the world's most competitive economies. I am very proud that SCCCI and its members have been a part of this journey. Over the years, we have helped our members adopt the Industry Transformation Maps (ITMs) to enhance their capabilities. This has strengthened our economic foundation and created the opportunity for a brighter future!
5. In the face of challenges such as geopolitical tensions, trade protectionism and climate change, it is evident that these are not short-term issues. Therefore, no matter how successful and prosperous Singapore becomes, we must be acutely aware that as a small island state, Singapore is greatly affected by external headwinds which would become increasingly complex and difficult in the future. Therefore, Singapore enterprises and Singaporeans must remain vigilant, strive for excellence and seek new growth opportunities.
6. SCCCI will continue to support our Government in building a pro-enterprise environment and policies, take active efforts to understand and share the business community's concerns, and forge a stronger tripartite partnership. We will also continue to provide various resources, connections and platforms to help enterprises to seek new business opportunities, new momentum and new success in these turbulent and uncertain markets!
7. Two months ago, our Chinese community organised a tribute dinner for Senior Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong. At the dinner, a scroll with

the Chinese words “惠我无疆 (Merits and Deeds of Governance that have Benefitted the People)” by renowned artist Mr Lim Tze Peng was presented to SM Lee. It is only through SM Lee’s values and spirit of “大我 (Putting the Greater Good above Self)” and his relentless contributions that both Singapore and Singaporeans have benefitted greatly. This mindset is both crucial and important. If everyone only focuses on “小我 (Self-interest)”, how will our nation and our home become bigger and stronger?

8. As the theme of this year’s National Day Parade – “Together, As One United People” suggests, our nation’s prosperity is built upon the unity and cooperation of all Singaporeans. As we look into the future, we need to be even more united as we forge ahead and overcome challenges together. Let us continue to uphold the spirit of resilience, hard work and excellence as we venture into new areas, create new opportunities and scale new heights!
9. In closing, I once again thank Minister Chee Hong Tat, Your Excellencies and everyone for your presence tonight. With gratitude and anticipation, let us wish Singapore a happy 59th birthday as well as solidarity, peace and prosperity! I also wish all of you good health and success in your endeavours! Thank you.
