



*Prime Minister
Singapore*

27 April 2018

Mr Lim Hng Kiang

Dear Hng Kiang,

Among the third generation ministers, I have known you the longest, for more than 40 years. We were contemporaries in Cambridge, we entered public service together, and we have worked with each other in multiple roles.

Over many decades, you have served the country with dedication and distinction. In Cabinet, you have carried heavy responsibilities, and implemented many policies to improve people's lives and advance Singapore's interests. You are steady under pressure, analyse problems rationally and objectively, and have a sensitive feel for political considerations. Your approach is hard-headed and practical, yet infused with a human touch.

You have helmed the Ministry for Trade and Industry for the last 14 years, developing economic strategies to build resilience and sustain growth in an uncertain global environment. At the macro level you aimed for economic growth, and kept the economy growing vigorously, even at our high per capita GDP levels. At the micro level you understood that market forces were often the best way to accomplish policy objectives, but also knew how to intervene when markets did not work well, or to achieve social goals.

You built up key industry clusters in the manufacturing sector, including petrochemicals, semiconductors and life sciences, by promoting foreign investments and creating the right conditions for the sectors to grow. You marshalled resources and expertise through SPRING, IE Singapore, and JTC, to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to upgrade, grow and internationalise. In 2005, you created the Competition Commission of Singapore to ensure industry competition and properly functioning markets. You also focused MTI on its core mission of promoting economic growth and creating good jobs, by rationalising your statutory boards and associated companies,

and divesting activities which operate better as private entities, such as Ascendas and Jurong International.

Externally, you worked hard to build trade relationships with other countries. You and your team negotiated an extensive network of free-trade and partnership agreements, which were of both economic and strategic value to Singapore. With our ASEAN partners, you pushed for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025. This year, we signed the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), after many years of hard work. After the Trump administration withdrew the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, you worked with the other 10 remaining countries to find common ground, and to conclude a CPTPP agreement that preserved almost all of the original deal.

In times of economic stress, especially during the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, your calmness and experience were pillars of strength. You systematically reviewed the options, and worked out a bold and effective package of measures, including notably the Special Risk-Sharing Initiative and Jobs Credit schemes. This response bolstered confidence, saved jobs, and enabled the Singapore economy to recover swiftly.

Before MTI, you served as Minister for Health, where you had dealt with an equally difficult crisis: the SARS outbreak in 2003. All of us, including the Government, worried about the consequences. We were under enormous pressure to stop the virus from spreading. We had to limit the loss of lives, prevent fear and panic, and contain damage to the economy. We did not know if our measures would work or if the epidemic would slow. We had to make tough decisions on the spot – to close down the Pasir Panjang Wholesale Market where cases had been discovered, thereby affecting many livelihoods; to institute temperature taking in schools and at our borders, to detect possible SARS cases; to impose home quarantine on those who had come into contact with SARS cases, and so prevent the infection from spreading. Amidst general fear and alarm, you assessed the situation and made sound decisions. After the crisis passed, the World Health Organisation praised Singapore's response to the outbreak. The measures that you had put in place during SARS helped us to meet subsequent public health threats, such as the H1N1 influenza pandemic in Singapore in 2009.

In your first ministry post, as Minister for National Development, you made it a priority to enable low-income families to own homes. You launched initiatives to increase home ownership, including a scheme for sitting tenants to

buy over their rental flats, and building new, elderly-friendly studio apartments for seniors. These policies continue to give Singaporeans a tangible stake in the nation's future.

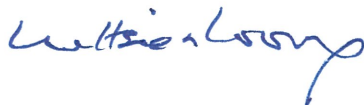
Your legacy in our built environment is felt in many other ways. Many residents in private estates have benefitted from the Estate Renewal Strategy that you started in 1995. You also built a Downtown core at Marina Bay, not only creating a new financial district, but also providing new tree-lined paths, open-air cafes, and a world-class concert hall – the Esplanade Theatres on the Bay – for Singaporeans to enjoy.

While managing your ministry portfolios, you gave full attention to your constituency and residents. For more than 20 years, you have helmed the West Coast GRC as Minister. Your residents know you as a hardworking and personable MP who can be counted on to resolve municipal problems and see to their concerns. Their confidence in you and your GRC team is reflected consistently in successive election results.

Throughout your career, you have worked for the best interests of Singapore and Singaporeans. I and my colleagues will miss your pragmatic, farsighted approach to issues and your wise counsel in Cabinet. But I am happy that you will continue to stay active in Singapore's affairs, as you will continue serving as an MP, and also remain Deputy Chairman of the Monetary Authority of Singapore and a Director of GIC.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Lee Hsien Loong'.

Lee Hsien Loong