

Addenda to the President's Address at the Opening of the Second Session of the 13th Parliament

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (STRATEGY GROUP)

ADDENDUM TO THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

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DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER-IN-CHARGE OF STRATEGY GROUP

Singapore has succeeded because we have been able to anticipate challenges and opportunities, take a long-term view, and plan ahead to prepare for the future. Singaporeans expect this of their Government. The Strategy Group coordinates and organises the Public Service to implement the strategic priorities of the Government, in order to achieve the best outcomes for Singapore and Singaporeans.

Planning for Our Future Together

We are entering a new phase of nation building. The world around us is changing rapidly and often in unexpected ways. Our own economy is undergoing a fundamental transformation amidst a shift in the global economic centre of gravity towards Asia. Technology will change the way we live, work, and play. And the texture of our society is evolving as our population ages and new social challenges emerge.

This more complex landscape will require policy responses to challenges that are still emerging and therefore not yet well-defined. It will require Government agencies to work more closely together because solutions to policy challenges will increasingly cut across ministry domains. We will also need to tackle the challenges of today, while at the same time building for tomorrow. The Strategy Group identifies these cross-cutting medium- to long-term priorities, and organises the efforts of Government agencies to collectively address them.

We will continue to strengthen Whole-of-Government planning and execution. First, we will stretch the bounds of our ambition for a better future that we will build together. Second, we will ensure that all parts of Government work in stronger alignment in pursuit of these goals. Third, we will ensure that resources and capabilities support our national priorities.

Our Population – Shaping our Future Economy and Society

Our population policy is one such cross-cutting issue that will define this phase of nation building. Our changing demography has wide-ranging effects on many Government strategies – including in areas such as the economy, healthcare, infrastructure, defence planning, and social cohesion.

In the medium-term, our ageing population presents both challenges and opportunities to sustain a dynamic economy. The slower growth of our local workforce provides a strong impetus to press on with economic restructuring. In the long-term, our fertility rates and our openness to others who are willing and able to contribute to Singapore will shape the type of society that future generations of Singaporeans will live in.

We will thus focus on three broad strategies across Government to maintain a population profile that improves the lives of each generation. First, we will develop and implement policies to enable all Singaporeans to age with purpose and dignity. Second, we will make Singapore a great place for families, where marriage and parenthood are achievable, enjoyable, and celebrated. Third, we will maintain a careful balance in our foreign worker as well as immigrant flows.

In doing so, our population policies will support a cohesive society and vibrant economy. Singapore will continue to be a place where Singaporeans are proud to call home.

Climate Change – Opportunities for Green Growth and Addressing our Vulnerabilities

Climate change is another cross-cutting issue that requires a Whole-of-Nation response. Singapore must address climate change and safeguard our collective future. As a low-lying, tropical island state, we must develop plans to address the impact of climate change such as rising sea levels, higher temperatures, and more extreme rainfall patterns. At the same time, we need to work as part of the international community to reduce our collective carbon footprint.

The Strategy Group will coordinate Singapore's domestic and international actions to protect ourselves against the impact of climate change, and support international efforts to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. We will fulfil our commitment to the Paris Agreement. The Government will implement the carbon tax, and work together with all stakeholders, including people and businesses, to reduce energy use, increase energy efficiency, and reduce greenhouse gases. To this end, 2018 has been designated as the Year of Climate Action to raise awareness and intensify the national effort to bring down our emissions and adopt sustainable practices.

Just as we had seized new opportunities to develop solutions to address water scarcity, we can and must do the same for climate change. We will leverage our strengths in research, technology, and innovation to seize green growth opportunities. We will develop solutions to address sustainability challenges in our region and beyond, as countries make the transition towards low-carbon economies. This will create good opportunities for Singaporeans and our companies, and ensure Singapore remains economically competitive, sustainable, vibrant, and liveable.

Making our Shared Vision a Reality

Across Government, we are building from a position of strength. We will continue to plan for the medium- to long-term and lay strong foundations for our collective future. We invite all Singaporeans to join us in this journey.