

Parliamentary reply by DPM Teo Chee Hean on the Government's strategy in seeking Singaporeans buy-in for the Population White Paper and land use plan

**TWELFTH PARLIAMENT
ORAL ANSWER
WEDNESDAY, 6 MAR 2013**

Asst Prof Tan Kheng Boon Eugene:

To ask the Prime Minister (a) what is the Government's strategy in seeking Singaporeans' buy-in for the Population White Paper and land use plan; and (b) whether the Government will issue regular updates on progress made in the key areas in order to build trust and confidence in the roadmap to address Singapore's demographic challenge.

Mr Teo Chee Hean (for the Prime Minister):

Following an extensive debate on the Population White Paper and land use plan, Parliament passed an amended motion that reflects the concerns of Singaporeans, and calls on the Government to work on 5 key areas:

First, to resolve the current infrastructure strains,

Second, to develop infrastructure ahead of demand, to meet Singapore's future infrastructure needs and build in a buffer where possible,

Third, focus on encouraging Singaporeans to marry and have more children as a key priority, in order to attain a stable and sustainable citizen population even as our baby boomer generation moves into their silver years between now and 2030,

Fourth, ensure that the benefits of our policies flow to Singaporeans, while slowing down the growth of foreign labour,

Fifth, review our population policies and assumptions in the medium term, and ensure that our policies take into account the changing needs of Singapore and Singaporeans.

We will continue to study options and engage Singaporeans on population and its related issues on multiple fronts, including through the Our Singapore Conversation and other forums.

We will press on with delivering improvements to our infrastructure, especially housing and transport. We will support businesses in their efforts to increase productivity and reduce reliance on foreign manpower. We will also review policies to ensure inclusive and quality growth that benefits Singaporeans. This year's Budget has introduced further substantive steps to put these into effect, including the new marriage and parenthood measures and major improvements to the pre-school sector; tightening of foreign worker levies, dependency ratios, and eligibility criteria; enhanced support to help companies upgrade productivity; the Wage Credit Scheme and significantly enhanced Workfare Income Supplement.

As we continue to engage Singaporeans and work together on policies, address and overcome the specific and practical problems we face, and deliver on programmes to benefit Singaporeans, we hope to strengthen trust and consensus among Singaporeans on the future that we must build together.

The Government will continue to provide regular updates on the progress of proposals in the Population White Paper and Land Use Plan, through the release of studies, reports and announcements. We are also working towards a medium-term review before 2020.