

## Welcome Remarks by DPM Teo Chee Hean at the 36th Singapore Lecture



Your Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China

Mr Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

- 1 A very warm welcome to all of you to the 36th Singapore Lecture.
- 2 It is our great privilege to have His Excellency, Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China with us this morning. I would like to thank President Xi for agreeing to deliver this lecture on the occasion of your State Visit to Singapore, in spite of your very tight programme here.
- 3 Though this is President Xi's first State Visit to Singapore, he is an old and valued friend of Singapore, having visited us many times. Between 1999 and 2007, President Xi held leadership positions in Fujian, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, coastal provinces which were at the frontier of China's reform and opening up efforts. President Xi oversaw the strengthening of business links and people-to-people ties between these provinces and municipalities and Singapore. He became Vice President in 2008, and visited Singapore in 2010 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of diplomatic ties. As President of the Central Party School, he also oversaw our cooperation in the training of cadres and officials, a key pillar of our bilateral collaboration.

4 President Xi was appointed President of the People's Republic of China in March 2013. As President, he continues to provide the leadership and guidance to enhance the close friendship and cooperation between our two countries. We will soon launch negotiations for a substantive upgrade of the China-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. President Xi has also charted an ambitious vision for the third Sino-Singapore Government-to-Government project in western China. This project is envisaged to become a priority demonstration project under President Xi's "One Belt, One Road" initiative. Together, these two initiatives will further broaden and deepen Singapore-China cooperation and bring it to an even higher level.

5 This year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Singapore diplomatic relations. President Xi's visit completes the exchange of State Visits commemorating this milestone, following President Tony Tan's successful State Visit to China in July.

6 Although our formal diplomatic relations only began in 1990, the solid foundation of our modern relationship goes back to the 1970s. Then, the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew and Mr Deng Xiaoping had the foresight to recognise the potential for a mutually beneficial and enriching friendship between our two countries. Since then, successive generations of leaders on both sides have built on that foundation and ensured that our cooperation has kept up with our two countries' evolving interests and development needs. Bilateral cooperation has expanded from economic cooperation to new areas such as human resource development, financial services, social governance, sustainable development, and food safety. Today, Singapore is the largest foreign investor in China and China is Singapore's largest trading partner. We are proud of the remarkable progress we have achieved together in the past 25 years. But we can also look forward to the huge potential that our two countries can realise through our continued cooperation. The discussions and agreements we reach during the visit of President Xi on the 25th anniversary of our bilateral relations will set the direction and provide the impetus for an even closer, all-round relationship for the next 25 years and more.

7 Beyond bilateral relations, President Xi's confident leadership has had a transformative effect on China and the world. Today, China is already a global economic powerhouse that is open, prosperous, and well-integrated into the international system. President Xi's vision of the "One Belt, One Road", in particular the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, has the potential to bring greater prosperity to China, Singapore, and the rest of the region. His bold plans for comprehensive and deep reform will lead China into the next stage of development. Under President Xi's wise leadership, we can expect that China will play an even wider and more constructive role in the region and the world.

8 We are therefore privileged to hear President Xi share his views with us, with his speech titled "Forging A Strong Partnership to Enhance Prosperity of Asia".

9 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, let me now invite His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, to deliver the 36th Singapore Lecture.

10 Thank you.

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