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Title : SPEECH BY CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA AT THE
DINNER IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 30TH MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE PUBLIC SECTOR GAMES
Mr. Peter Ho,

Head of Singapore Civil Service,

Colleagues and Friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here this evening. The programme clearly states that our friends from Singapore are here for the Malaysia-Singapore Public Service Games although I observe that you have been feted more than you have been engaged in any games, just like we were in Singapore last year.

2. It seems to me that the only real serious game will take place on the golf course tomorrow. But as the main objective of the visit is to enhance our bonds of friendship, then, what better way to do so than by sharing a meal, or two, together.

(ARRANGE: FLORAL PARADE, VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR)

3. Although we meet in an environment of competition, and competition as I am always advised, is a zero-sum game, I want to stress here that this should not be a reflection of our relationship. Let us not go the route of Martina Navratilova, the tennis player, who is famous for having said that "Whoever said, 'It's not whether you win or lose that counts,' probably lost."

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. The general impression is that Malaysia and Singapore ARE competitors. The format of games, generally, tends to reinforce this. That is what I like about the format of our game in Singapore last year. However, we all know that our relationship is about more than just competition. There is also co-operation, obligation and responsibility.

5. Of course we compete - for business, for trade, for the location of regional corporate headquarters. And yes, we have some bilateral issues to resolve. However, these irritants are not insurmountable. With patience, goodwill and understanding of each other's interests, they can and will be resolved.

6. Let us instead build on synergies and possibilities. Ultimately our success depends more on both of us succeeding, than on 'beating' one another. We have more in common than separates us.

7. Therefore let us capitalise on our strengths, not least of which is our people-to-people relationship that is so deeply entrenched. Add to that, our links of geography, culture and history. Plus, our strategic location between two fast growing economies, namely China and India. As leaders in the public sector let us focus on these strengths to enhance wealth creation and further our socio-economic links.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. The timing of this occasion is highly appropriate coming on the heels of the ASEAN Summit, where the leaders voiced their commitment to hasten the establishment of the ASEAN Community by 2015. At the risk of making motherhood statements, I must reiterate the obvious: that individual ASEAN member countries, by themselves cannot achieve the goals set out by the leaders. This can only be achieved if we work towards better allocation and ensure synergistic use of resources.

9. As the leaders of the public sector of both countries, I believe we have a major role to assume in ensuring that Malaysia and Singapore drive the economic imperative that will bring to fruition ASEAN's visionary plan. It is, therefore, all the more imperative that we build on this occasion to enhance the spirit of collaboration and cooperation. I am very hopeful that the camaraderie that this interaction generates will facilitate and improve the way we work. And Peter, you have my hand phone number and my e-mail address.

10. On this note, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a warm welcome to Malaysia and hope we will be blessed with clement weather as we head for the golf course tomorrow.