

**OPENING ADDRESS BY NUSS VICE-PRESIDENT MR DAVID HO**  
**NUSS POST BUDGET 2012 DIALOGUE**  
**12 MARCH 2012**  
**AUDITORIUM, SHAW FOUNDATION ALUMNI HOUSE**

**Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister of State for Defence and Education**

**Fellow NUSS MC Members, NUS Alumni, Friends**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good evening and welcome to NUSS Post Budget 2012 Dialogue.

First, allow me to thank the NUS Office of Alumni Relations for sharing their Auditorium with us for this Dialogue. We look forward to more events here with the support of OAR.

Two years ago, the Society invited Minister Lim Swee Say to speak on the 2010 Budget and we had a very engaging evening. Tonight we continue with this tradition to engage the Minister of State, Mr Lawrence Wong, behind closed doors to broaden our members' perspectives on the nation's affairs. I would like to remind members and alumni that this is a closed door session. You are free to ask difficult questions but kindly maintain decorum.

Mrs Josephine Teo, Minister of State for Finance and Transport, who is the original speaker scheduled for this Dialogue, was called away on an official engagement overseas. Though she is unable to address us today, she had kindly arranged for Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister of State for Defence and Education, to address us today. Mr Wong is no stranger to budget planning, having worked in the Ministry of Finance before entering politics in the last General Election. We thank Mr Wong for spending time with us despite his hectic schedule.

**Singapore Budget 2012**

As we are all aware, Singapore Budget 2012 aims to build a stronger and inclusive nation. At the Opening of Parliament last year, the Prime Minister defined an inclusive society to be 'one where everyone benefits from the progress of the nation'. It means restructuring our economy and reallocating our limited resources, to look after the less fortunate in our society, build more hospitals for the elderly, schools and colleges, public housing,

transportation and a safety net for all citizens. It also means improving work productivity, creating job opportunities and managing the cost of living in Singapore.

At the same time, there is debate in Parliament on the meaning of 'social recession' in Singapore. Are we losing family bonds, shared values and community cohesiveness? In a recent Straits Times editorial and I quote..... "Money alone cannot fix social deficits". Yes, we need to address these issues beyond the 2012 budget. How we forge ahead is how we determine the kind of cohesive society we want to build for Singapore. Fortunately, there are many green shoots initiatives in the making for a cohesive society in Singapore and we only need to pay special attention to nurture their growth.

We look forward to an engaging evening with MOS, Mr Lawrence Wong.

Thank you.