

WELCOME ADDRESS
BY NUSS PRESIDENT, MR TONG HSIEN-HUI
AT THE *COMMENTARY* DIALOGUE
WEDNESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2024, 7:00 PM
DELLA & SENG GEE GUILD HALL, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Madam Halimah Yacob, Former President of Singapore
Dr Gillian Koh, Editor of the Commentary
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening, and welcome to the National University of Singapore Society. It is our pleasure to host this special dialogue session following the release of the *Commentary on Singapore*, and we are deeply honoured to have Madam Halimah Yacob, join us tonight.

Madam Halimah's exceptional career in public service, union leadership, and community engagement—to say nothing of her contribution as President of Singapore—have profoundly shaped our nation. Her unwavering commitment to unity and inclusivity exemplifies what it means to be "a President for everyone." She has a longstanding association with NUSS, including being our former Patron where she inaugurated our Guild House at Mandalay Road. We are deeply grateful for her presence here tonight and eagerly anticipate her insights on social cohesion, our evolving societal landscape, and the strategies needed to navigate future challenges.

The *Commentary on Singapore* series, which debuted in May 2024, marks a milestone in NUSS' commitment to fostering intellectual discourse. This three-volume edition, featuring selected essays published in *The Commentary* between 2010 and 2019, provides in-depth analyses on topics crucial to Singapore's growth—governance, foreign policy, economy, environment, culture, and social identity. With contributions from renowned scholars and thought leaders, the *Commentary* brings a wealth of insights on our community.

I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our distinguished contributors for their invaluable insights. We would also like to acknowledge the pivotal roles played by Associate Professor Victor Savage and Dr Gillian Koh in shaping the legacy of the *Commentary* and being the editors of the publication during that period.

As Singapore's largest graduate alumni society, NUSS serves a vibrant community of over 15,000 members. Beyond offering premium facilities across our three Guild Houses and a wealth of networking opportunities, NUSS fosters thought leadership, intellectual growth, and meaningful discourse through lectures, dialogues, and other platforms. Our core mission is to advance the interests of the National University of Singapore while contributing actively to Singapore's social and cultural landscape. We are especially honoured to host prominent speakers, including ministers, and thought leaders, whose insights enrich our community's engagement with pressing national and global issues.

This year, we celebrate our 70th Anniversary with a variety of events showcasing the strength and shared values of our community.

We kicked off the celebrations with the "Plant-It-Forward Challenge" in January, raising funds for needy students and reinforcing our commitment to environmental stewardship. At the NUSS 70th Anniversary Charity Golf Dinner, we continued our fundraising efforts with Minister Chan Chun Sing, as the Guest of Honour. More than \$850K was raised for the NUSS Bursary Fund supporting needy students in these two campaigns.

A few months ago, we welcomed the Menteri Besar of Johor to deliver the 70th Anniversary Lecture where he spoke on the Singapore Johor Special Economic Zone.

Finally at the end of this month, our celebrations will culminate with the NUSS Day festivities with Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat as the Guest of Honour. It promises to be a day of fun, laughter, and camaraderie and I would like to encourage everyone to join us.

In closing I would like to highlight that this evening's dialogue embodies our 70th anniversary theme of "Enduring Ties & Building Legacies." The Commentary series not only underscores our connection to Singapore's intellectual heritage but also offers insights for shaping a legacy that meets future challenges.

With that, I would like to wish you all a great session ahead. Thank you.