

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY NUSS PRESIDENT, MR TONG HSIEN-HUI
AT THE NUSS 70TH ANNIVERSARY LECTURE
8PM, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE, DELLA & SENG GEE GUILD HOUSE
18 SEPTEMBER 2024, WEDNESDAY**

Yang Amat Berhormat, **Dato' Onn Hafiz Ghazi**, Menteri Besar of Johor

Mr Poad Mattar, NUS Pro-Chancellor

Mr Ong Keng Yong, Singapore's Ambassador at Large and NUSS Distinguished Member

His Excellency Sok Khoeun, Cambodia's Ambassador to Singapore

NUSS Past Presidents and Outstanding Members

Distinguished Guests, Fellow NUSS Members, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening, and a warm welcome to the NUSS 70th Anniversary Lecture.

Tonight, we are honoured to have Dato' Onn Hafiz Ghazi, Menteri Besar of Johor, as the distinguished speaker for the NUSS Lecture. His presence is particularly significant, not only as we celebrate NUSS' 70th Anniversary, but also as this year marks the centennial of the Johor Causeway—a lasting symbol of the enduring bond between Singapore and Johor.

Dato Onn is an accomplished leader with a diverse background in politics, business, and community development. He served as a Member of the Johor State Legislative Assembly for Layang-Layang from 2018 to 2022 and is currently a member of the Johor State Legislative Assembly for Machap.

He has made notable contributions and achievements throughout his career. For example, as the Johor State Executive Councillor for Tourism, Youth and Sports during the Covid period, he established and led the Southern Volunteers program, which mobilized over 20,000 Johorean youths to assist in the registration of over 500,000 Johoreans for vaccination.

Recognizing the importance of digital entrepreneurship, he initiated Online Entrepreneurship Workshops to train and support young Johorean entrepreneurs.

We look forward to his insights on the future of Johor-Singapore relations and the potential of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone, which promises to deepen regional cooperation and strengthen ties between our two nations.

The NUSS Lecture has long served as a platform for thought leaders, facilitating conversations that shape national and regional discourse. This tradition began in 1991 with Mr George Yeo, then Acting Minister for Information and the Arts, and has continued through the years with many distinguished guests, including Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who graced our 50th and 60th Anniversary Lectures. Tonight's event is a continuation of that legacy, providing a platform for critical reflections on our shared future.

As Singapore's largest graduate alumni society, NUSS is home to over 15,000 members, offering not only networking opportunities and premium facilities across our three Guild Houses but also fostering intellectual growth through lectures, dialogues, in support of our core mission which is to promote the interests of the National University of Singapore while contributing to the broader social and cultural fabric of our society.

This year marks a monumental year for NUSS, as we celebrate our 70th Anniversary through a series of events that reflect the full breadth of our society's mission.

We kicked off our celebration with the "Plant-It-Forward Challenge" earlier this year, emphasising our commitment to sustainability. For every \$1,000 donation, a tree was planted, and we raised \$70,000 for the NUSS Bursary Fund.

A few weeks ago, the NUSS Charity Golf tournament, raised \$777,000 for the NUSS Bursary Fund, supporting students from lower-income backgrounds in their pursuit of higher education—a testament to our long-standing commitment to social equity and education.

In November, Mdm Halimah Yacob will be the guest speaker at our Commentary Dialogue together with editor, Dr Gillian Koh. For those who may not be aware, the NUSS Commentary is Singapore's oldest academic journal and was first published in 1968.

At the end of the year, our celebrations will conclude with the NUSS Day to be held at the Kent Ridge Guild House with DPM Heng Swee Keat as Guest of Honour. This festive extravaganza will feature activities and games for all ages, along with great food. It will serve to reinforce the bonds of friendship and community built over the years.

As we commemorate this milestone year, let us not only reflect on our proud history but also embrace the future with a sense of unity and purpose. NUSS will continue to be a place where meaningful connections are forged, ideas are exchanged, and legacies are built—much like the enduring bond between Singapore and Johor.

Before I end, I would like to thank Mr Soh Yi Da, Chairman of our Intellectual Pursuit Sub-Committee, who, together with his Committee and the Secretariat, have worked tirelessly to put this event together.

I wish you all a great evening ahead.

Thank you.