



Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong speaking with some participants of the inaugural Singapore Summit Young Societal Leaders Programme yesterday. PHOTO: AZIZ HUSSIN FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

Young leaders must work together, rally others: ESM Goh

Priscilla Goy

Young leaders are important and they must work together to address needs in society, said Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong yesterday.

“A vibrant society depends on the energy and idealism of its young leaders, within and outside government. The needs of society will require them to come together as young societal leaders, and rally others along as well, to develop organic, innovative and cross-sec-

toral solutions,” he said.

He also advised young leaders to be grateful for how other people had helped them, and to serve others when called upon. “I belonged to a generation that could see the work done for us by (founding prime minister) Lee Kuan Yew and the ‘old guard’ leaders. We just felt we had to carry on,” said Mr Goh, who was the nation’s second prime minister, from 1990 to 2004.

He was speaking at the inaugural Singapore Summit Young Societal Leaders Programme at the Hilton Singapore hotel.

The four-day by-invitation-only event, which started yesterday, convened 18 leaders under the age of 40, from Singapore and around the world, who show “exemplary commitment” to improving societies. It includes dialogues, field visits and participation in the annual Singapore Summit, which starts tomorrow and will be attended by thought leaders discussing economic and financial issues.

Mr Goh also answered questions from the participants during a one-hour dialogue last night.

When asked how to ensure that a person’s legacy is sustained after he steps down from his leadership position, Mr Goh suggested that the participants find “good people who can succeed you – not just in politics, but all over”.

“Youth institutions, the civil service, the judiciary, universities, corporations, the business sector, the social service sector – if these institutions are manned by able, honest, sincere people, then you begin to have a structure that can carry on... people who dare to do the job and keep the thing going,” he said.

Having people of similar values of integrity and compassion was also important, he said.

“Your methods may change and the shape of your institutions may change. You may have new institutions or merged institutions. But basically, the values of the institutions do not change.”

Singapore Summit conference chairman and Singapore Management University chairman Ho Kwon Ping, who moderated the dialogue, noted that when people succeed others in leadership positions, “there’s always the temptation to try to be someone you’re not because you think there are expectations of you”.

He commended Mr Goh for not trying to lead in the same way as Mr Lee, and told audience members: “Be authentic. Be who you are. Listen to your own inner voice.”

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