

SPEECH BY SEAH KIAN PENG, SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT, AT THE OPENING OF SINGAPORE'S 15TH PARLIAMENT ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2025

Dear Honourable Members,

Let me first thank the Leader of the House, Ms Indranee Rajah, for nominating me and for her generous remarks. My thanks also to Mr Pritam Singh, Mr Liang Eng Hwa, Ms Nadia Samdin, Dr Hamid Razak, for your support and your kind words. Above all, I am humbled and grateful to all Members for the trust you have placed in me in re-electing me as the Speaker.

2. Since becoming the 11th Speaker of Parliament in August 2023, I have strived to be fair, firm, and impartial. I hope my actions over the last two years have shown this to be so.

3. I am confident that debates in this 15th Parliament will be robust and spirited. What I hope to see, compared to the last term, can be briefly summed up as follows:

- First, fewer advisories from the Chair, from me;
- Second, for each sitting, I ask all members to be present, to be prepared and to be accountable;
- Keep your speeches, your questions, your clarifications and your replies clear, succinct and concise — minimum words, maximum impact;
- Avoid needless repetition – once is enough for Hansard;
- By all means, scrutinise and criticise policies vigorously, but do set out trade-offs clearly and offer alternatives for consideration;
- In the course of debate, we can change our positions and agree; likewise, we can agree to disagree;
- And yes, please resist playing to the gallery – this is the House of Parliament, not livestream on TikTok.

4. Remember: long speeches test not only the patience of fellow Members, but also the attention spans of the public. Members will be pleased to know that my speech today will be considerably shorter than the one I did two years ago!

5. All of us have just taken our oath of allegiance. Let us remember that the laws we pass here touch the lives of fellow Singaporeans: individuals, families, businesses, organisations and for generations to come.

6. This 15th Parliament sees the largest number of Members ever and the highest number of women Members. We have indeed come far from our first Parliament.

7. I thank all for your trust in me – it is a duty I take with care and gravity. Since taking on this role, I have stepped away from all my corporate responsibilities. On the plus side, I have gained something valuable – more time for my family, my constituents and my friends.

8. As a “young senior,” I have also taken heed of Prime Minister’s call for all of us to improve our health span – as our lifespan increases. I am pleased to report some progress on my side – since becoming Speaker, I believe I have become a little bit fitter. In fact, my recent eye check that I went to showed that my short-sightedness have improved by about 100 degrees! Perhaps this job really does sharpen one’s vision as it most certainly does test one’s patience.

9. As a Parliamentarian, the demands in and outside the Chamber are heavy. It is a marathon and so, I would like to remind all members to not neglect your own self-care. We can’t look after our constituents, we can’t come up with good policies, we can’t make good speeches if we ourselves are not in reasonably good shape.

10. In accepting this Chair of the House, I remain deeply humbled. During the time that I occupy this seat, I pledge to be an impartial and effective Speaker, and to represent this Parliament with dignity.

11. Let me close as I did on 2 August 2023. In the months and years ahead, debates will be spirited and sometimes, I’m sure, heated but that is part of a working democratic society.

12. But let us always uphold the decorum of this House. Treat each other with respect and never, never forget our paramount duty – to serve the people of Singapore with integrity and conviction. It is through the workings of this chamber that we can ensure a cohesive and fulfilling future for our country, and build a more caring, a more giving, a more compassionate and inclusive community for our children and grandchildren.

13. Honourable members, thank you once again for your support and trust. I look forward to working with all of you in this 15th Parliament of Singapore. Thank you.
