We all know the national narrative: economic prosperity, home ownership, and healthcare provision – these were just some of the goals which Singapore has achieved in the past few decades, despite the unfavourable circumstances many saw her to be in. This past inspires me about the possibilities of the future, which I choose to face with optimism.

An idealistic vision would depict Singapore as a bustling economic hub which offers a high quality of life for all her people. Though elusive, this vision provides hope for us, and will continue to be the equilibrium we seek. Many areas for improvement have been identified, but I feel that the following are two key ones:

Firstly, there is a much-needed paradigm shift on the meaning of economic growth. Beyond an infinite pursuit for better economic prospects, we have to progress in a sustainable manner and place greater emphasis on two other core pillars - society and the environment. Else, we risk destabilising the very foundation upon which economic growth takes place.

For social sustainability, there is a need to narrow the socio-economic disparity not just in terms of the money. We can afford to be more empathetic towards the less fortunate and minority groups, proactively interacting with them and integrating our different ways of life together. Extending a helping hand to and interacting with people in our community is not something done only by those who bear the titles of "social worker" or "volunteer", but everyone. Ultimately, I do hope that our perceived dimensions of community will continue to widen beyond borders, and what we strive for will not be a “better country” but a “better world”. This means being more open and kind to people outside our national borders. On all fronts, more convicted effort has to be in place.

Secondly, I want to be in a Singapore where we can each have our own aspirations and priorities, whilst wanting and being able to participate in a national narrative. Responsible discourse is vital in sieving out what we espouse or eschew, and understanding the direction in which we want to move. Education plays a key role in nurturing a community which can do so. I hope that Singapore will continue to believe and invest in our education system. Ultimately, our education system should nurture critical thinkers who can responsibly critique on the education system itself. This develops a self-learning nation, where the community has the resilience to identify and solve its own problems.

In all, our visions give us something to strive towards, but we have to set realistic goals to bring us closer to realising these visions in the short time-span of 15 years. I hope that we will not just dare to dream, but sincerely take action, one step at a time. When I look back to this day in 2032, I hope to say that we have come so far in these 15 years, and I am glad to have taken the journey with everyone else in Singapore.