Managing the tensions of tribal politics: Lawrence Wong

At the IPS-RISS conference yesterday, Finance Minister Lawrence Wong focused on the threats posed by new forms of tribalism and identity politics, and how Singapore can meet these challenges.

Here are excerpts from his speech.


The realization of human rights is to look at those for whom we are partners. And we need to see if the way we treat those with a "minority" identity, or "minority" issues, is something that we need to reflect on.

It is important to understand the drivers of identity politics and the responses to them. This requires a deep understanding of the history and context of each case.

The challenges faced by Singaporeans are not unique, and the solutions to these challenges are also not unique. But we must be mindful of the differences in our contexts and the need for flexibility in our approach.

In the case of the Green Zone, the government has taken a proactive approach to engage the community and work towards a consensus. This approach requires the engagement of all parties involved, including the community, the government, and the minority group.

In conclusion, the government's approach to identity politics is one that is mindful of the challenges faced by Singaporeans, and seeks to find a balance between upholding human rights and ensuring social harmony. This requires a continued commitment to dialogue, engagement, and flexibility.