

# Lim Hwee Hua

BORN:

1959

INDUCTED:

2014



## First woman Cabinet minister

In 2009, Lim Hwee Hua became the first woman to be appointed a full Cabinet minister. Her political career began in 1997 when, as a candidate of the ruling People's Action Party, she was elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) for Marine Parade.

After five years as a backbencher, she was in 2002 appointed Deputy Speaker of Parliament, the first woman to hold the position. In 2004 she was made Minister of State for Finance and Transport, and in 2008 she was promoted to Senior Minister of State for Finance and Transport. The following year Hwee Hua was appointed to Cabinet as a Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and the Second Minister for both Finance and Transport.

At the Finance Ministry, Hwee Hua spearheaded the reform of the accountancy sector, reviewed Government's investments in business, and helped implement financing options for small and medium enterprises. Meanwhile, at the Transport Ministry, she corporatised Changi Airport, helped establish a master-plan for aviation and was instrumental in expanding the International Maritime Centre.

Her ministerial responsibilities reflected her educational background. After completing her A levels at Raffles Institution, Hwee Hua went to Cambridge University on a scholarship, graduating with an honours degree in mathematics and engineering in 1981. She then joined the Administrative Service and held various positions in the Finance, Education and Law ministries.

In 1989 she obtained a Master of Business Administration from the University of California and joined Swiss Bank Corporation as an investment analyst. In 1992 she moved to Jardine Fleming as Head of Research and Director of Business Development and in 2000 she joined Temasek Holdings where she was Managing Director of Strategic Relations. She left Temasek in 2004 when she became a minister of state.

As an MP, Hwee Hua campaigned for better literacy for children from low income households, and she pushed for employers to adopt more family-friendly policies and for

improvements to childcare. She also served as the Chair of the PAP Women's Wing, where she set a target for increasing the number of females in Parliament to 30%.

In 2011 Hwee Hua lost her seat in Parliament and retired from politics. She returned to the corporate sector, taking on appointments such as that of director at local private equity firm Tembusu Partners, Senior Advisor to the global investment firm Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, independent non-executive member of Ernst & Young's Global Advisory Council, and honorary chairman of the Securities Investors Association (Singapore).

"Men will always step up even if they're not the most competent for the post. Women tend to do a lot more self-examination. In her hesitation, her superior might form the conclusion that she is not as interested, and it becomes a missed opportunity for her... I've learnt to never underestimate my own capabilities... If I think I have a fair chance of making it good, I just go for it."

#### SOURCES:

- [Lim Hwee Hua to retire from politics - Asiaone](#)
- [Lim Hwee Hua: 'Trust in Temasek and GIC is still intact' - The Straits Times SingaPolitics](#)
- [Lim Hwee Hua: After politics, I got my sleep back - The Straits Times SingaPolitics](#)
- [SCWO Wall of Fame](#)