

WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR BRUCE POH, DIRECTOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE WORLDSKILLS SINGAPORE 2012 COMPETITION HELD ON THURSDAY 5 JULY 2012 AT 1000 HOURS AT ITE COLLEGE WEST

Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Finance and Minister for Manpower

Mr Bob Tan, Chairman/ITE and Members of the ITE Board of Governors

Polytechnic Principals

Colleagues from Polytechnics and ITE

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1 Good morning. On behalf of the WorldSkills Singapore Council, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you to the Opening Ceremony of WorldSkills Singapore 2012. It is our honour to have Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam here to grace today's event.

- 2 Singapore has come a long way since our first participation in the WorldSkills International Competitions in 1995. To date, we have participated in a total of **nine biennial WorldSkills Competitions** at the international level and organised **nine WorldSkills Singapore Competitions** at the national level.

WorldSkills – The “Skill Olympics”

- 3 The mission of WorldSkills International is to promote an awareness of the value of skills and high skills standards for the country’s economic prosperity and individual’s personal fulfilment.

- 4 Although the world will always need its accountants, doctors and lawyers, we must not forget that it is our technicians, IT specialists, nurses, and chefs who make our living and working spaces bright and cool; who make communications with our loved ones around the world possible; care for the sick at hospitals; and ensure that our dining experiences are exquisite - everyday things that we take for granted. The people behind these services have one thing in common – all have had a skills education and contribute to the well-being of society and the economic development of Singapore.

- 5 The International WorldSkills Competition began in 1953 in recognition of, and to celebrate the important role that skilled specialists play in today's world. Modelled after the Olympic Games, the Competition is today, a global arena for the most technically-skilled youths from all over the world to showcase their exceptional talents and to compete for recognition as World Champions.

- 6 ITE, together with the Polytechnics, organises the national WorldSkills Singapore Competition once every two years and facilitates Singapore's participation at the international WorldSkills Competition. Our key objective is to elevate the status and standards of technical skills in Singapore so that bright and technically-gifted youths have the opportunity to showcase their talents and represent Singapore at the International WorldSkills Competitions.

- 7 Today marks the start of the tenth WorldSkills Singapore Competition. The winners of the competition will have the honour of representing Singapore at the 42nd International WorldSkills Competition, to be held in Leipzig, Germany, in July 2013.

WorldSkills Singapore 2012 – ‘My Talent’

- 8 To acknowledge the importance of skills and to build upon the previous WorldSkills Singapore theme of “My Skills, My Pride”, the theme for this year’s competition is ***My Talent. My Talent*** was selected by the Organising Committee to position skills as a gift, an **aptitude, to be recognised and celebrated, with pride**, in the same manner as one would celebrate musical or sporting talents.

Team Singapore’s Achievements

- 9 Over the years, Team Singapore has brought much pride and joy to our young nation. At the 41st WorldSkills Competition in London last year, the Team punched above its weight to clinch four Gold, one Silver and two Bronze Medals, and seven Medallions of Excellence to finish ahead of industrialised nations such as Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, and the United States of America in the medals table.
- 10 Singapore’s total medal tally from our participation in the nine international WorldSkills Competitions stands at **20 Gold, five Silver and eight Bronze medals, together with 40 Medallions of Excellence**. To top that off, our competitors have also brought home the prestigious Albert

Vidal Award twice, once in 2005, and then again, in 2009. The Albert Vidal award is the highest award at the WorldSkills Competition given to the single highest scoring competitor from among the hundreds of competitors from around the world.

- 11 We are very proud of Singapore's accomplishments and look forward to a new team of competitors who will continue to fly the Singapore flag high in Leipzig in 2013.

Conclusion

- 12 As Chairman of the WorldSkills Singapore Council, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Principal Sponsors, the **Tote Board** and the **Workforce Development Agency of Singapore**, for their support and contributions to skills development in Singapore. I would also like to extend my deepest appreciation to our Sponsors and many partners from industry and education institutions for both their generous sponsorships and their steadfast commitment and efforts in helping us with the planning and organisation of this competition.

13 We invite all of you to take a tour of the ITE College West campus and our authentic learning facilities, while visiting the skills competition areas. You can also have a go at the booths designed to give visitors a taste of the various skills areas. I am sure you will be excited at the array of talents shown by our competitors.

Thank you.