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**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR BRUCE POH, DIRECTOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION, AT THE OPENING OF THE WORLDSKILLS SINGAPORE 2008 COMPETITION HELD ON THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER 2008 AT 1500 HOURS AT ITE COLLEGE EAST**

Rear-Admiral Lui Tuck Yew, Senior Minister of State,  
Ministry of Education & Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts

Distinguished Guests

Colleagues from Polytechnics and ITE

Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

**Introduction**

1. Good afternoon. On behalf of the Institute of Technical Education and the WorldSkills Singapore Council, a very warm welcome to this Opening Ceremony of WorldSkills Singapore 2008. We are especially grateful to Rear-Admiral Lui Tuck Yew, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Education & Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, for accepting our invitation to grace today's event as our Guest-of-Honour.

**WorldSkills National and International Competitions**

2 WorldSkills Singapore 2008 is the eighth national skills competition held in Singapore. Organised by ITE in conjunction with the Polytechnics once every 2 years, the goal of the WorldSkills Singapore competition is to promote the image and standard of technical skills, and to provide opportunities for youths to excel in their skills and to compete for the honour of representing Singapore at the International WorldSkills Competition.

3 Modeled after the Olympic Games, the WorldSkills Competition provides a global platform for skills champions from each country to come together to compete in over 40 different skill areas for recognition as world-class skilled professionals. The Competition is organised biennially by WorldSkills International and its mission is to promote a worldwide awareness of the importance of high standards and the contribution of skills and for economic success and individual fulfillment. Officially, Singapore has been represented by ITE as a member organisation of WorldSkills International since 1995.

### **WorldSkills Singapore 2008**

4 When we first started the WorldSkills Singapore national competition in 1994, there were only 54 finalists from an initial pool of 108 competitors taking part in eight skill areas. Over the years, the WorldSkills Singapore participation rate has grown three fold. This year's competition will see 168 finalists out of 318 competitors taking part in a record number of 17 skill areas. This competition has not only grown in size, but also diversified into more skill areas in engineering, info-communications, design, and services.

5 Today, competition in the Engineering skill areas range from Automotive Technology to Industrial Control to Mobile Robotics; while in the Info-comm skill areas, the range of competition areas include IT Software Applications, IT PC & Network Support and Telecommunication Distribution Technology. In the Design skill areas, competition has extended to include Graphic Design Technology and Web Design, while the Services skill areas include Beauty Therapy, Caring, Cooking and Restaurant Service. This range of competition areas reflects developments in industry and sectors that drive economic growth worldwide.

6 Over the next three days, we expect intense competition. Each finalist will be doing his best to vie for the “Singapore Skills Idol” title of his skill area. Our finalists will not be singing, but by all intent and purposes, they have gone through the same rigorous training and put in tremendous effort to refine their skills. And as in singing, every skill has peaks of excellence. The best will represent Singapore in the international World Skills Competition in Calgary, Canada next year.

7 I am also pleased to inform you, that Singapore will be participating for the first time, in the ASEAN Skills Competition that will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, next month. We will be sending a team of 18 competitors to compete in nine skills areas.

8 Our hope then is to excite young people about skills and they will see career opportunities and will value craftsmanship and skills in new light. And hopefully, they will add among their role models and “idols”, skills champions, who model not only world-class skills excellence but also excellence in spirit.

### **Conclusion**

9 As Chairman of the WorldSkills Singapore Council, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Principal Sponsors, the Singapore Totalisator Board and the Workforce Development Agency of Singapore, for their support of skills development in Singapore. WDA’s tagline, “Learning for Life, Advancing with Skills” is certainly an apt slogan of the WorldSkills Council’s aim of promoting continual learning and excellence in skills. Our Main Sponsors, Co-sponsors and supporters of WorldSkills Singapore 2008, including our many partners from

industry and education institutions, have been unstinting in their support, commitment and dedicated efforts in planning and organising the competition; offering not only monetary support but also time and effort. To them, we want to extend our deep appreciation.

10 I wish all competitors the best in the competition. Thank you.