

WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR BRUCE POH, DIRECTOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION (ITE), AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF WORLDSKILLS SINGAPORE 2011 ON THURSDAY 20 JANUARY 2011, AT 1000 HOURS, AT ITE COLLEGE WEST

Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong

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

Principals and Colleagues from the Polytechnics and ITE

Sponsors, Judges and Partners

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

- 1 Good morning. On behalf of ITE and the WorldSkills Singapore Council, let me extend a warm welcome to you, to the Opening Ceremony of WorldSkills Singapore 2011. We are very honoured to have Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong grace today's event.
- 2 In fact, the idea of participation in Skills Competition was mooted by Senior Minister Goh, who was then Prime Minister, during the Inauguration Dinner of ITE, in March 1992. We took up the challenge and joined WorldSkills

International in 1993. Since then, our young talents have done well and brought glory to the nation. Team Singapore has participated in eight biennial WorldSkills International Competitions, and have organised eight WorldSkills Singapore National Competitions.

WorldSkills –The Olympics of Skills

- 3 The aim of WorldSkills is to promote the image and standard of technical skills, and the status of skilled professionals worldwide. The National Competition provides an excellent platform for youths to excel in their skills and to compete for the honour of representing Singapore at the International level. Modelled after the Olympic Games, the International Competition provides a global platform for skills champions from each country to come together to compete for recognition as world-class, skilled professionals.
- 4 The three-day competition beginning today will be the ninth WorldSkills Singapore Competition. It will decide who will have the honour of representing Singapore at the 41st WorldSkills Competition to be held in London, in October, this year.

WorldSkills Singapore 2011 – ‘My Skills. My Pride’

- 5 When we organised our first National Competition in **1994**, we had only **54 finalists** from a pool of **108 competitors**, taking part in **eight skill areas**. I am happy to share that the participation rate in this competition has since tripled. This year, we have **159 finalists**, out of **333 registered competitors**, taking part in a record number of **18 skill areas**.

- 6 The growth of the competition reflects the increasing diversity and interest in skills training offered by ITE and the Polytechnics to meet growing industry demand for quality skills. It also shows a growing acceptance and excitement about skill- based careers and the value of vocational and technical education in Singapore.

- 7 To capture the essence of this excitement, we have themed this year’s competition as **‘My Skills. My Pride’**. ‘Pride’ is a powerful and self-reinforcing emotion that motivates people to do well and deliver results. It generates energy and the passion for excellence. With the rigorous training and enormous effort put in by the competitors and their coaches, I am sure these competitors are proud of their skills, and are confident of excelling and doing well.

8 In fact, it is this passion and pride in skills that has led to Team Singapore's excellent performance in the eight WorldSkills Competitions we have taken part in. In total, our young skills champions bagged a total of **16 Gold medals, four Silver medals, six Bronze medals and 33 Medallions of Excellence**. At the International WorldSkills Competition in Calgary, Canada in 2009, Team Singapore set a very high benchmark. The team won **three Gold Medals, one Bronze Medal, and eight Medallions of Excellence**. We also won the **Albert Vidal Prize** in the IT & PC Network skill area. This is an award given to the single highest achieving competitor at WorldSkills Competition. We are proud of Team Singapore's achievements, and look forward to meet the new team who will carry the torch and do Singapore proud again in London later this year.

New Skill Competition Areas

9 This year, we have **introduced two new skill areas**, namely, **Creative Modelling and Visual Merchandising**, which will be introduced in the International Competition later this year. For Creative Modelling, competitors have to design a product and create a prototype of the product. For Visual Merchandising, competitors have to design, plan and

install a window display for a product. These areas reflect the increasing diversity and possibilities in careers that require an integration of creativity, mental and hand skills.

10 As interest in vocational and technical education grows, the WorldSkills Singapore Council will continue to identify new and relevant skills areas to generate and sustain interest among talented youths to showcase their skills and talents.

Conclusion

11 As Chairman of the WorldSkills Singapore Council, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation and thanks to:

- Our **two Principal Sponsors**, the **Tote Board** and the **Workforce Development Agency of Singapore**, for their continual strong support of skills development and promotion in Singapore.
- Our **Main Sponsors, Co-sponsors, Supporters** and **Partners** from industry and education institutions who have not only provided monetary support, but also sacrificed their personal time to help us plan and organise this competition.

12 We would like to invite all of you to tour this new ITE College West campus and visit the competition areas. We hope that you will feel the energy and pride of the young competitors in their skills, and give them the moral support they need.

Thank you.