

ADDRESS BY MR BRUCE POH, CHAIRMAN, WORLDSKILLS SINGAPORE COUNCIL, AND DIRECTOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ITE, AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF 2016 WORLDSKILLS SINGAPORE COMPETITION, ON FRIDAY 15 JULY 2016, AT 2.30 PM, AT THE AUDITORIUM, TAY ENG SOON CONVENTION CENTRE, ITE HEADQUARTERS

Mr Ong Ye Kung

Acting Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills)

Mr Bob Tan,

Chairman, ITE,

Members of the ITE and Polytechnic Board of Governors

Polytechnic Principals

Experts and Coaches

Competitors, Parents

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

- 1 Good afternoon and welcome to the Closing Ceremony of the WorldSkills Singapore Competition 2016. Minister, thank you for officiating at this exciting event!

- 2 A week ago, we were gathered here, to witness the launch of the three-day Competition. One hundred and fifty students from ITE and the polytechnics competed in 17 skills areas. They qualified from an initial talent pool of 300 and have undergone training for a long time to earn the title as Singapore's most skilled youths in their respective categories.
- 3 Today, some of them will emerge champions of their skills areas. Regardless of how the results turn out, we want to acknowledge the journey taken by all competitors towards skills excellence. We applaud your grit and perseverance.

Championing Skills for Careers

- 4 This year is the 12th time we have organised this biennial WorldSkills Singapore Competition. When we started in 1994, it was known as the National Skills Competition then. The name of the competition has changed. The stature of the event has changed. The value of the Competition has also changed. Our youths are now more eager than ever to challenge for the opportunity to represent Singapore at the world stage.

- 5 What has not changed, however, is the importance of skills to Singapore, for our economy, and for young people to find work that is fulfilling and meaningful. It is therefore significant that we are holding the Closing Ceremony of WorldSkills Singapore 2016, today, on **World Youth Skills Day**, a day declared by the United Nations, not just to address issues of youth unemployment and under-employment, but also to highlight the importance of skills in empowering self-fulfillment and aspirations.
- 6 UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, puts this well. He says, "Skills development reduces poverty and better equips young people to find decent jobs. It triggers a process of empowerment and self-esteem that benefits everyone." The WorldSkills Singapore Council, comprising the five Polytechnics and ITE, is therefore proud to support the skills movement in Singapore.
- 7 So, this year, the Council has decided to add two new elements to the WorldSkills Singapore Competition. First, to raise the profile of skills among the general public, and help the new generations consider meaningful careers in skills, we have collaborated with MOE, WDA and the industry to promote skills and careers. In addition to the competition proper, we showcased four **Skills Hubs** – in Engineering &

Electronics; Health & Applied Sciences; IT & Info-communications; and Services. Visitors enjoyed features like ‘Give-it-a-Go’ booths, where they could complete skills-related activities; industry showcases and demonstrations, and ECG booths for secondary students to ask questions on skills areas. Also, especially for the community, we ran 66 free courses, which they can subsequently sign up under Continuing Education & Training or CET.

Championing Skills for Careers

- 8 Secondly, for Team Singapore to continue to do well at the global stage, we need a strong pool of Professional Experts – people who keep themselves abreast of the demands and technologies for each skills area.
- 9 At the Opening Ceremony last week, DPM Teo Chee Hean announced a new **WorldSkills National Expert Scheme** – to recognise Experts for contributing their experience and expertise to WorldSkills Singapore, and for keeping up-to-date the technical descriptions, competition rules and assessment requirements for each respective skills area. Over time, this will help better prepare our youths when they compete at the world stage.

10 We are happy that the first eight WorldSkills National Experts will receive their appointments from Acting Minister Ong today. To the WorldSkills National Experts, you embody the notion of 'deep skills', which our national SkillsFuture movement hopes to imbue in our youths. We hope that you will find joy and meaning in developing the next generation of trade experts and skilled talents.

Conclusion

11 It is in celebration of our youths that we are here today. I am happy to see many family members, coaches and friends here to support them. You have journeyed with the competitors and have seen their sweat and tears along the way. We dedicate this Closing Ceremony to you, as well.

12 I would like to place on record our gratitude to our two Principal Sponsors – the **Tote Board** and the **Workforce Development Agency of Singapore** – and to all our **Platinum Sponsors, Gold Sponsors, Supporters and Partners** from industry and education institutions. You have all helped make this competition a big success.

13 To all winners, the whole of Singapore is firmly behind you, as you prepare for and carry the national flag high in next year's WorldSkills Competition in Abu Dhabi. Congratulations and go for it, Team Singapore!
Thank you!