

SPEECH BY GUEST-OF-HONOUR MR DESMOND LEE, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE BCA-INDUSTRY BUILT ENVIRONMENT ITE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD CEREMONY 2017, HELD ON 13 FEB 2017, AT 3.30PM, THE HALL, ITE HEADQUARTERS & COLLEGE CENTRAL

Mr Lee Fook Sun, Chairman, BCA

Dr John Keung, CEO, BCA

Ms Low Khah Gek, CEO, ITE

Scholars

Family members

Ladies and gentlemen

1 A very good afternoon. Let me begin by warmly congratulating all 108 of our scholarship recipients today. It is a proud day for you and your parents; likewise for the built environment, which is here to support you and cheer you on.

2 I think you have chosen well because the built environment sector will offer you exciting and meaningful careers.

3 Our distinctive skyline and our vibrant neighbourhoods were the collective and cumulative effort of generations of professionals in the built environment sector.

4 You are soon to be part of this bigger team – shaping the spaces which we all live in, places in which we interact with our family and friends; and by doing so, your work will influence our way of life.

5 The journey ahead for the built environment sector looks set to be an exciting one, for a couple of reasons.

6 First, Singapore, our city, will constantly need to be refreshed and revitalised:

- New buildings replacing old ones.
- And old, historic buildings being conserved, and adapted to suit a different age.

7 Second, we are going to make big bold moves over the next 10-20 years to rejuvenate our cityscape. The Committee for Future Economy (CFE), which recently unveiled its recommendations, recognised that our future city will need to be adaptable, sustainable, and resilient. It must provide the necessary space and infrastructure for our economy to grow, and maintain a high-quality living environment for fellow Singaporeans. And as aspiring members of the built environment sector, all of you may have the opportunity to play a part in some of the major projects in the pipeline to achieve this.

8 For example, some of you may be involved, in the future, in the Jurong Lake District development, which will become our second CBD. It will also be home to the upcoming Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High Speed Rail terminus. That will be an exciting and vibrant space, linking Singapore to Kuala Lumpur in a heartbeat.

9 You may also be involved in the Greater Southern Waterfront, which will become a unique waterfront district and an exciting canvas on which our built environment sector, together with other stakeholders, can work on to make our city alive and exciting for the future.

10 And not to mention, the brand new canvas at Paya Lebar, when the Airbase moves out. The area that is currently occupied by the Airbase becomes another canvas for all of you, together with other members of the built environment sector, to energise, to excite and to make home for Singaporeans.

11 Third, the built environment sector is undergoing a major transformation. In a way, all of you, when you graduate and start work, will be pioneers in your own right. We are working on an industry transformation map (ITM). The Industry Transformation Map will help our sector enhance our productivity, principally through the introduction of a concept known as Design for Manufacturing and Assembly (DfMA).

12 What does this transformation being pushed for the ITM mean for all of you? What it means is that there will be more highly skilled jobs. These will involve the use of advanced digital engineering tools, such as 3D Building Information Modelling (BIM) and Virtual Design and Construction, where first you build virtually and then you actually undertake the construction. It is not science fiction; it is not the future. The future is already here – see how some of the firms you are going to be attached to work; visit the BCA Academy and see the virtual laboratory; bring different built environment sector professionals together, using high-tech information modelling to allow all of you to work together on the construction in virtual space before you actually construct. At the same time, you will also see more opportunities to pioneer innovative building technologies, so that in Singapore and the region and abroad, you can build faster, better and greener.

13 Even as we undertake this transformation, we must remember that the built environment sector is also about essential infrastructure and amenities that are integral to modern living. One example is our lift and escalator industry.

14 Today, there are about 63,000 lifts and about 6000 escalators around Singapore. I am sure it will continue to rise.

15 As our buildings become taller and more densely utilised, it is critical for us to ensure high standards in lift and escalator safety.

16 Older lifts and escalators will need to be modernised with up-to-date safety features. So there will be an increasing need for skilled engineers and skilled technicians. I encourage you to consider the opportunities that are available in this industry.

17 And if you are interested, we want to help you seize these opportunities. Let me explain a couple of ways that we will help you get into the sector if you are keen.

18 First, we have a range of scholarship and sponsorship programmes that some of you in the audience have already taken up.

19 Ashley Loh graduated from the ITE's Vertical Transportation course. Ashley's efforts and good performance earned him an internship with a lift contractor firm, Joven Engineering, who is also co-sponsoring his scholarship. Ashley hopes to become a lift specialist who can one day guide and mentor others who share his passion in this trade.

20 Muhammad Faizal's interest in becoming a lift technician began during his Electrical Engineering course at the ITE. When a lift contractor firm, Hin Chong Engineering Construction, contacted him and offered to co-sponsor his scholarship, Faizal agreed to take it up. Faizal enjoys learning about lift systems and the latest technologies in vertical transportation. He is confident that the profession he has chosen will offer job stability and plenty of learning opportunities. I am sure he will find it fulfilling.

21 Both Ashley and Faizal are already undergoing on-the-job (OJT) training with mentorship from their sponsor firms. I wish them all the best!

22 Second, in partnership with the Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), BCA has been encouraging lift and escalator companies to participate in career fairs for local jobseekers.

23 Third, we are looking at developing a training framework to increase the capacity and the competency of the sector.

24 Fourth, we will establish very shortly a Lift & Escalator Sectoral Tripartite Committee (STC). It is a mouthful, but essentially it involves three parties – the government, the unions and the industry – coming together as a tripartite committee on lifts and escalators, bringing together leaders from the public and private sectors, industry unions, and trade unions.

25 They will look at ways to attract, develop and retain skilled engineers and technicians in both the lift and escalator sector.

26 The Committee is expected to present their recommendations by the end of this year. Once these are taken onboard and put in place, I am sure they will have an immediate impact on all of you taking this course.

27 Finally, BCA, NTUC, e2i, the Singapore Lift & Escalator Contractors & Manufacturers Association (SLECMA), and several lift and escalator companies will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) later today.

28 What will this MOU be about? By signing this MOU, companies will commit to helping to attract locals – Singaporeans – into the lift and escalator sector.

29 They will do so by supporting scholarship and sponsorship programmes, *Earn and Learn* programmes, and our job fairs. They will also work with industry associations and government agencies to ensure that this sector continues to offer attractive and relevant jobs to Singaporeans.

30 There will be opportunities for upgrading, development, and career advancement.

31 Apart from the lift and escalator sector, there are many other companies who have been supportive of our efforts to develop the built environment sector. Building this sector involves investing in young people, who aspire to come in to the built environment sector and take it to a different level. The support of these companies is crucial, as employers play a vital role to groom young talent. I would like to thank all the companies who have co-sponsored today's scholarships.

32 It is encouraging that we are seeing an increase in participation by the industry. For example, 19 recipients today are co-sponsored by industry firms, up from five last year. The number of sponsor firms has also increased from four to 14.

33 In particular, Tiong Seng Contractors co-sponsored four scholarships, while Acma Engineers and ECAS Consultants each co-sponsored two! I thank you all for taking on these scholars, grooming and developing them, and giving them mentorship and training.

34 I hope more companies will come forward to partner the government and industry associations to groom and develop Singapore's very own talent.

35 I am confident that all our scholarship recipients will contribute positively to your companies and to the broader sector.

36 To all of you, let me encourage you to go forward, pursue your interests, experience new things, and expand your horizons. More importantly, stay up-to-date with new and upcoming technologies. The built environment sector will be very different from the sector of yesterday. It will be moving forward, bringing in technology and new ways of doing things at a faster pace. You need to be up-to-date with all of these. As Anggie Lee had told BCA, the use of IT is the future of the built environment sector. She also enjoys 3D BIM, which allows stakeholders of the construction value chain to collaborate and optimise workflow. I am sure young people will be very familiar with technology, like fish in water. In this day, it will help bring the whole sector into the BIM revolution. Being part of the tech-savvy generation, she, and others like her, will find it easy to pick up skills required to use and manipulate BIM to its fullest potential. I know that many of you share her affinity with technology. So I look forward to seeing all of you contributing very soon to transforming our sector into one that is technologically-advanced, highly productive, green and efficient.

37 Once again, congratulations to 108 of you. I hope that today marks the beginning of promising and rewarding careers for all of you in our built environment sector.

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