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**OPENING SPEECH BY SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY,
MS LOW YEN LING, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF ASIAN
ATTRACTIONS EXPO 2017, ON 14 JUNE 2017 9.35AM, MARINA BAY
SANDS SINGAPORE**

Mr Greg Hale, Chairman, IAAPA,

Mr Paul Noland, President and Chief Executive Officer, IAAPA,

Ms June Ko, Vice President (Asia Pacific Operations), IAAPA,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentleman,

National Archives of Singapore

INTRODUCTION

1. A very good morning to all of you. I am delighted to join you at the opening ceremony of this year's Asian Attractions Expo (AAE). Over the next three days, we expect to have with us over 8,000 local and

foreign attendees from the attractions industry, gathered here to “Explore a World of New Ideas”.

2. I am pleased that the AAE has once again returned to Singapore. The tourism sector is one of Singapore’s key service sectors and contributes 4% of Singapore’s gross domestic product. In fact, 2016 was a record year for our tourism sector. Compared to 2015, visitor arrivals grew by 8% to 16.4 million while tourism receipts rose even higher by 13% to \$24.6 billion.

KEY MESSAGE 1: THE EMERGENCE OF AN AFFLUENT MIDDLE

CLASS IN ASIA

3. It is useful to remind ourselves why this is an Asian Attractions Expo. The emergence of an affluent middle class in Asia has generated a strong interest in the Asian attractions industry. Over the next few years, we will see many new attractions opening in Asia. While the booming Asian attractions industry is good news to us, we also need to adapt to the reality that the growing numbers of middle-class travellers are becoming more discerning – they are seeking quality and unique experiences. Hence, we need to develop attractions and experiences that will meet the demands and preferences of these Asian travellers.

KEY MESSAGE 2: PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

4. Firstly, product development is important. To ensure that Singapore remains a destination-of-choice for visitors, we continuously seek to develop new attractions and rejuvenate our existing attractions. One major example is our plan to develop Mandai into a world-class nature-themed precinct and wildlife destination. This will include a new home in Mandai for the Bird Park that is currently located in Jurong, a new Rainforest Park, a nature-themed indoor attraction, landscaped public spaces for recreation and eco-accommodation. We look forward to welcoming many more tourists when the first phase of the new Mandai Precinct is completed in 2020.

KEY MESSAGE 3: TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION AND INNOVATION

5. We can also build on our existing attractions by using technology in innovative ways. Take Sentosa Development Corporation, for example, which is currently enhancing its mobile application. It will be introducing a new interface for its mobile application, MySentosa 2.0. This enhanced application will make use of data analytics to provide visitors with pertinent information and services like real-time transport information and location-based notifications on events and promotions. This technology will enable Sentosa to provide a more customised

experience to its visitors, with the aim of enhancing their stay and enjoyment on the island.

CONCLUSION

6. Attractions will continue to be a mainstay of the tourism industry. It is therefore important that we continue to create quality tourism products and visitor experiences to ensure the progression and expansion of this industry. For industry players who wish to add to the vibrant attractions landscape here in Singapore, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) offers assistance through various grant schemes, tax incentives and resources. I encourage you to visit STB's website to find out more about the support available.

7. With that, I wish everyone a fruitful time at AAE 2017. Thank you.

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