

SPEECH BY MR LAWRENCE WONG, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SECOND MINISTER FOR FINANCE, AT “20 UNDER 45: THE THIRD EDITION” EXHIBITION LAUNCH, HELD ON FRIDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2017, 3.00 PM AT THE URA CENTRE, ATRIUM

Mr Lim Eng Hwee, CEO of URA,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. A very good afternoon to all of you. I'm very happy to join you at the launch of our third edition of “20 Under 45”. To all the 20 architects here who are being recognised, congratulations to all of you! Let's give them another big round of applause.
2. This is the third edition of our '20 Under 45' series. It was started in 2004 to profile up-and-coming architects. I am very glad to see that we have architects from our first two cohorts of the series here with us today – they are still going strong!
3. In our first edition, we featured architects like Chan Soo Kian, Wong Mun Summ and Siew Man Kok, who have all achieved numerous international awards for their works.
4. In our second edition – Tan Shao Yen and Ong Tze Boon – both featured in the second edition – have since become presidents of the Board of Architects

National Archives of Singapore

and the Singapore Institute of Architects respectively, and have also won international recognition for their works.

5. All of the architects we have selected in the first two editions have done well. We look forward to even more achievements from our third batch of architects under 45!

6. The work that architects do is important and it has a real impact on the lives of Singaporeans. Poorly-designed cities can easily become a high-rise concrete jungle that is stressful to live and work in, whereas well-designed buildings, homes, neighbourhoods, with greenery and public spaces can improve our well-being and happiness. That's an objective I'm sure we all share and feel strongly about.

7. There are many opportunities for our architects to get involved in projects to positively impact Singapore and Singaporeans. We have a major pipeline of infrastructure projects coming up over the next decade and beyond, including Changi Terminal 5, Tuas mega port, new districts all over Singapore, like Punggol with the SIT campus, Jurong with the High Speed Rail, Woodlands with the Rapid Transit System Link to Johor, and eventually, even spaces in the Southern Waterfront and Paya Lebar.

8. Beyond these major investments, there are also projects all over Singapore which all of you are involved in as well. As we embark on these projects, we cannot continue with the status quo. Our philosophy in Singapore must be

always one of striving to improve and do better. We must always innovate and strive for higher standards.

9. In the area of architecture, what are the things that we can do better in? Architects have typically been associated with the aesthetics of the building form and structure. Our architects in Singapore do this very well, and this is why we have such a wonderful urban landscape in Singapore. Building aesthetics remain important and our architects should continue to focus on this, but there are also other aspects of design that we should be looking at.

10. Firstly, we need to think about how we can design for sustainability and maintainability. We need more green buildings that are environmentally-friendly for both Singapore and the world, as we tackle long-term threats of climate change. Green buildings should not be green in design alone, but also in the way we look at utilities, energy, and how we make them as environmentally-friendly as possible.

11. A related point is on maintenance. From time to time, we receive feedback about buildings that are beautiful to look at, or even iconic, but not functional to use and difficult to maintain. It is important that we do not design for design's sake, but have functionality and maintainability incorporated upfront as an integral part of good design.

12. Here in Singapore, we have a very good chance of creating a distinctive Singaporean design that is not just attractive and elegant, green and

sustainable, and also functional and easy to maintain, especially for a tropical climate like ours. This is something that the architectural community in Singapore can help us to develop.

13. Second, I would encourage architects to design not just good buildings, but to create great places. When people describe a place they enjoy, they use words like 'fun', 'vibrant', 'exciting', 'welcoming' – they describe the intangible qualities of a great place, the kind that people talk about and want to come back to over and over again.
14. Creating such a place entails a broad view of design. You have to consider factors like accessibility, inclusion and comfort. It is about designing public spaces that are conducive for people to gather and interact, and break down social barriers.
15. This is also about working with partners and the community – because the people who have an interest or stake in a particular place, are the ones who are most important in deciding what will be done to develop or improve a place.
16. All these demands mean that the role of the architect can and should be broader and bolder. This does not mean that we are diminishing design; rather, we are placing greater emphasis on design, with broader and bolder requirements. It is not just about creating isolated physical forms, but also about being responsive to environmental and community outcomes, and creating places

that people want to live in. These are huge demands that architects can respond to.

17. I have read about an architect saying that “Architecture needs to evolve from expressing the individual’s creativity to supporting the community’s creativity”.

I am glad that many of our young architects already imbibe such an ethos, and taking on these new ways of design in your works.

18. Finally, we should continue to increase public awareness and appreciation for good design. For architects to do your work well, you will need clients and the public at large to appreciate good design. We would also like to do more to raise public awareness on what good design entails.

19. I am glad to announce that “The Archi-Model Centre” will be set up here at The URA Centre. It will be an exhibition space managed by URA to showcase the works of local architectural practices, especially small, medium and up-and-coming practices. We are starting work on this space now, and it will be ready by the third quarter of next year. We look forward to all of your support when the Centre is up and running.

20. In conclusion, we have many promising architects in Singapore and we want to help you succeed in their endeavours. We look forward to continued collaboration with our architectural community in building our future Singapore. On this note, I am happy to open this exhibition, and I hope all of you will enjoy viewing it. Thank you very much.