

OPENING REMARKS BY MR NG CHEE MENG, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) & SECOND MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, AT THE OPENING OF THE REPUBLIC POLYTECHNIC AND PSA EXPERIENTIAL LAB, AT THE REPUBLIC POLYTECHNIC, ON FRIDAY, 5 JANUARY 2018, 2.30PM

Mr Yeo Li Pheow, Principal and CEO, Republic Polytechnic,

Mr Ong Kim Pong, Regional CEO of Southeast Asia, PSA International,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting me to be part of the opening of the RP-PSA Experiential Lab.

Maritime Industry and Singapore

2. Our Singapore story is intrinsically linked to our port. Since our early days, Singapore's economy has developed around our port. Today, as the world's biggest transshipment hub, Singapore connects to some 600 ports. Shipping lines make frequent calls on Singapore. That means businesses in Singapore can get their goods into and out of Singapore quickly and at competitive rates.

3. Our port also anchors the vibrant maritime ecosystem in Singapore, which is a key engine powering our economy today. The maritime sector as a whole contributes 7% of our GDP and employs more than 170,000 people.

Digital Transformation and Disruption

4. We have done well, but past achievements do not guarantee future successes. The maritime sector is ripe for disruption and is already undergoing transformation. Technological innovations are rapidly changing the nature of business. For example, ports around the world are under greater pressure to improve productivity, service reliability, and turnaround time of ships. At the same time, they must adapt to the changing requirements of shipping.

5. Our port must therefore invest in technology as a multiplier of capacity, to boost productivity and transform the jobs of today into higher-quality, higher-value jobs of the future. Digitalisation and automation are key enablers in this regard.

6. With digital transformation, there will be new, exciting career opportunities at our port. For one, we will need more programmers and data scientists for a variety of port-related functions. One could start as a programme analyst handling data analytics, then move up the ranks to become a systems engineer, before stepping into a senior managerial position.

7. For those who are more inclined to be at the front-line, you can take up a job overseeing automated yard cranes enabled by smart software, intelligent sensors, and

cameras. We will also need operators to fly drones to inspect port equipment and assist in troubleshooting through remote video streaming.

8. Indeed the maritime sector offers a rich variety of rewarding maritime careers. What we also need to set us apart from our competitors is a well-skilled, strong maritime workforce, capable of handling port operations and equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in this digital age. It is crucial that Singapore continues to enhance our value proposition as a maritime hub. We are taking proactive steps to develop key capabilities.

Launch of New RP-PSA Lab

9. I am therefore happy to see that PSA has teamed up with RP to establish the RP-PSA Lab. We believe that such partnerships will pave the way for new opportunities in the era of digitalisation.

10. The Lab will facilitate skills-based learning in port operations and technology. Some 1,000 students will benefit from hands-on training every year, and get a feel of a job in port operations. Students will get to experience what it is like to manage mega vessels and complex transshipment operations. They can try their hand at designing systems to handle container box movements. Students will also be trained to be comfortable working with new port technologies.

11. Robin Tan, a graduate of RP's Diploma in Industrial and Operations Management programme, credits his education at RP with giving him a strong foundation and a good head-start in his current job as a senior operations executive with PSA. The problem-based learning approach in his course allowed him to investigate and discover meaningful solutions to real world problems more effectively.

12. The RP-PSA Lab will provide more opportunities for students like Robin to explore a career in our port. The Lab will also showcase port operations of the future. A future-proof port is only possible if we have a future-ready workforce. This Lab is a key step towards equipping our students with the necessary skill-sets to work in a fast-paced and challenging environment, and to learn from one of the best port operators in the world.

13. The Lab complements existing training and development measures that the Government has put in place, such as the maritime-related Earn and Learn Programmes, which train fresh polytechnic graduates through facilitated, in-house structured programmes and mentorships with industry partners. Together, these efforts will ensure that our maritime workforce is ready for the port of the future.

Conclusion

14. To conclude, I congratulate RP and PSA for establishing this Lab. I believe it will help our young Singaporeans take advantage of the many career opportunities available in the maritime sector. May your journey bring many happy returns.

15. Thank you