

**SPEECH BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR MANPOWER MR ZAQY MOHAMAD AT THE LAUNCH  
OF THE SKILLS FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN RESOURCE AND THE SKILLSFUTURE STUDY  
AWARD FOR HR PRESENTATION CEREMONY,  
24 MAY 2018, 1.00PM, AT ONE FARRER HOTEL**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon.

1. I am happy to join you for the launch of the Skills Framework for Human Resource (HR) and the SkillsFuture Study Awards Ceremony.

**Demands on HR are changing**

2. The launch of the Skills Framework for HR comes at a timely juncture. With new trends and disruptions facing our workforce and businesses today, the demands on HR are also changing. To stay relevant, HR professionals will have to acquire new skills, and step up to be more proactive in supporting business needs. Let me elaborate.

3. Singapore's workforce demographics are changing in line with global trends. Falling birth rates and longer life expectancies mean that our workforce will age and growth will stagnate. At the same time, we are moderating our foreign workforce growth. Rapid technological advancements are also changing the way people work and how businesses compete. For continued, sustainable growth, our businesses and workforce will have to become more agile.

- Businesses will need to leverage technology for greater productivity and to pursue new areas of growth.
- Workers will need to acquire relevant skills throughout their careers, to keep up with technological advancements and changing business needs.

4. Likewise, ***HR professionals need to be agile so that they can help to catalyse the transformations needed for our workforce and businesses.***

- First, HR professionals will be expected to have a deep understanding of the business environment and business needs. They will need to translate their organisations' business and financial objectives into HR policies and practices that build up a workforce which can spur business growth and competitiveness.

- These could be through adopting skills-based hiring practices, investing in workforce training that reference the relevant Skills Framework, or planning ahead to help employees re-skill and transition into jobs in projected new growth areas. Skills in managing change among employees and departments in the organisation will also be key in today's rapidly-changing business environment.

- Second, with the changing workforce profile, HR will have a big role to play in engaging, retaining and leveraging a diverse workforce that delivers superior performance.

- For example, HR can look into flexible work arrangements, opportunities for job rotations and international exposure, as well as age-friendly workplace practices.

- Third, with technology disrupting the HR space, HR professionals need to understand and be able to use HR technology to their advantage. Increasingly, technology companies and start-ups are offering cloud software and

applications that support a wide range of HR functions, like payroll, leave applications, job applicant assessment and tracking, on-boarding, bite-sized learning and even employee engagement. These are important tools to cut down on manual processing work, enable more responsive HR service delivery and derive more value from HR processes.

- Finally, just as other business lines are leveraging big data to inform their plans and strategies, HR will need to be able to make better use of workforce data to deliver better services to employees, and derive business insights that support decision-making.

5. Through the HR Industry Manpower Plan (HR IMP) launched by tripartite partners last year, we have started efforts to transform and equip the HR sector for the future.

- The tripartite partners set up the Institute for HR Professionals (IHRP) as a HR professional body to set the HR standards of excellence and enable human capital development in enterprises.

- We also launched the national certification framework for HR professionals, which is administered by IHRP.

6. This is part of our move to shift employers from a Human Resource (HR) to a Human Capital (HC) mind-set, where employees are valued as human capital – assets to be invested in, rather than resources to be consumed.

**Skills Framework for HR provides clarity on skills and competencies needed for HR professionals to remain agile and relevant**

7. The Skills Framework for the HR sector that is being launched today is an integral part of the HR IMP. As the common reference for the skills and competencies required of agile, future-ready HR professionals, ***all stakeholders will now have greater clarity on what is needed to keep themselves, their HR teams and HR training curriculum agile and relevant for the times.***

8. The Skills Framework was developed by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and Workforce Singapore (WSG), with support from IHRP. HR professionals and industry stakeholders from more than 1,200 companies, education and training providers as well as unions were consulted, and I am glad to note that the desired attributes and skills in demand for HR that I mentioned earlier are well captured.

**The Skills Framework will benefit HR industry stakeholders**

9. 3 key stakeholder groups will benefit from the Skills Framework.

10. First, HR professionals. They will now have clarity on the skills and competencies that will allow them to be a driving force and enabler of human capital development in their organisation.

11. One such professional is Jacqueline Tan, a Senior Human Resource Executive in the Mandarin Oriental Singapore. Jacqueline currently handles employee benefits and relations for about 500 staff. Following a recent promotion, she will assume a new role as a HR business partner with the Kitchen and Food and Beverage team.

12. The Mandarin Oriental Singapore is a Human Capital Partner (HCPartner) recognised by tripartite partners for its commitment to developing human capital. Guided by the Skills Framework, Jacqueline plans to acquire skills in HR analytics and insights to further these HC efforts. She will also be able to guide the Food and Beverage team to build up critical skills from the Skills Framework for Food Services. I am confident that Jacqueline's new skills will benefit the hotel and its employees, and inspire others to follow suit.

13. Second, employers. They can use the Skills Framework to invest in relevant skills training for their HR teams.

14. One such example is OCBC. Jason Ho, who is OCBC's Head of Group HR and a certified IHRP Master Professional, believes that HR has to come to the forefront as the enabler of all Industry Transformation Maps (or ITMs) and Skills Frameworks. As such, employers should develop their HR professionals well so that they can apply the relevant ITMs and Skills Frameworks in their organisations, and drive workforce and business transformation.

15. As a HCPartner, OCBC has been putting this into practice by deep-skilling their HR team. As a result, OCBC's HR team was able to play a key role in developing the \$20 million OCBC Future Smart Programme, to equip 29,000 staff with digital skills to address the emergence of new and disruptive technologies.

16. The OCBC HR team is also improving the bank's HR systems so that they can build models for predictive attrition, learning intervention needs and job interviewees' experiences.

17. Jason intends to reference the Skills Framework for HR for his team's learning, and use it as pathway for his team to undergo IHRP Certification.

18. OCBC's commitment to upskill its HR team to be a key enabler of human capital development is commendable, and they can be a role model for other employers.

19. Third, Institutes for Higher Learning (IHLs) and HR training providers will also benefit.

20. One such provider is SMU Academy, which currently offers 8 specialised HR courses in areas closely aligned to the Skills Framework for HR, such as HR Analytics and Learning and Development. The Skills Framework will allow training providers like SMU Academy to review and update training programmes for continued relevance and value to the HR profession.

**IHRP will play a key role in Skills Framework for HR implementation**

21. ***We have taken steps to align the Skills Framework for HR and other HR IMP efforts.***

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22. As the national HR professional body, IHRP will have a key role in spearheading the implementation of the Skills Framework by partnering SSG and MOM to uphold the standards of the Framework, and shape the HR curriculum of more than 130 IHLs and training providers offering HR-related training today.

23. IHRP will also help drive the adoption of the Skills Framework for HR and those of other sectors through Skills Framework workshops for HR professionals. IHRP has been appointed by SSG to organise these workshops.

24. The skills and competencies in the Skills Framework will also be assessed as part of the IHRP Certification, which will serve as a benchmark of HR professionalism as HR professionals up-skill, re-skill and deep-skill in line with the Skills Framework. I am pleased to note that IHRP will include knowledge of the Skills Frameworks and government initiatives like the Adapt & Grow and SkillsFuture programmes in the IHRP Certification.

**SkillsFuture Study Award for HR will support HR professionals to acquire skills in the Skills Framework**

25. In addition, HR professionals who wish to acquire the necessary skills and competencies in line with the Skills Framework for HR can tap on the \$5,000 SkillsFuture Study Award for HR, which will be administered by IHRP.

26. Today, we are recognising our inaugural batch of 50 Study Award recipients. Demand for the SkillsFuture Award for HR in this first year has been strong, with our awardees chosen from a pool of over 200 applicants, and coming from various sectors such as Healthcare, Manufacturing and Financial Services. They are a good mix of those in junior and middle-management HR positions, aged between 23 and 55 years old, exemplifying the spirit of continuous learning we want in our workforce.

27. One senior executive who used the Award to update his skills is Tan Eng Chye, VP of HR (Learning and Development) in CIMB. Using the Study Award, Eng Chye pursued a coaching

course where he learnt ways to improve performance by changing mind-sets. He intends to set up coaching conversations with his team members to help them develop progressive mind-sets about continuous learning and development, with plans to extend these conversations to others in the organisation.

28. We also have young, aspiring HR practitioners like Nur Suhailah Binte Rosali among our Award recipients. Suhailah is a HR Executive at Busy Bees Singapore, a pre-school provider. She joined Busy Bees as a HR Assistant 3 years ago with no prior HR experience, and has since decided to pursue a career in the sector. She is currently taking a part-time degree in HR Management at the Singapore University of Social Sciences and plans to apply her skills to develop a more structured recruitment and talent management process for Busy Bees. I understand Suhailah is unable to join us today as she has an examination later at 4pm, so I wish her all the best!

29. I congratulate Eng Chye, Suhailah and all other recipients of the SkillsFuture Study Award, and encourage others to take advantage of the Award.

## Conclusion National Archives of Singapore

30. The future economy requires an agile and future-ready HR to enable human capital development and help drive business transformation. I look forward to all stakeholders using the Skills Framework for HR to support the on-going journey to build a future-ready HR for this purpose.

31. Thank you.