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**SPEECH FOR HCS's OPENING ADDRESS AT THE
INAUGURAL eGOV EXCELLENCE AWARDS (eGEA) 2013
CEREMONY, 30 APRIL 2013, 9.40AM, MBC AUDITORIUM**

Mr Steve Lee, Chief Information Officer, Changi Airport Group,

Distinguished Guests,

Friends and Colleagues,

Introduction

1. Good morning and a warm welcome to the inaugural eGov Excellence Awards Ceremony. I would like to start by congratulating the winners of today's Awards Ceremony. I would also like to thank our panel of distinguished judges for sharing your time and expertise in helping us to evaluate the many submissions received, as well as the officers that participated in this project. This event would not have been possible without your time, dedication and assistance.

2. Today, we gather to recognise and celebrate with our public sector agencies that have done well in e-Government. The last time we came together was in 2010 when we recognised agencies with excellent websites. In line with the changing environment, we have

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repositioned the eGov Excellence Awards 2013 to include five new award categories, namely in e-services, mobile services, data-sharing, people-engagement and shared services and systems. I am told that we received 93 submissions from 49 agencies this year and am very heartened by the strong and enthusiastic response.

3. Henceforth, MOF and IDA will be organising this event on a regular basis every two years to recognise the efforts of our agencies.

Our eGov Journey: We have come a long way

4. I think it is timely for me to recap our exciting and rich eGov journey.

5. We started in the 1980s with the Civil Service Computerisation Programme, when we laid basic ICT infrastructure **to transform public administration and increase our productivity.** I'm sure some in the audience will remember the transition from paper-based submissions in the past, to having almost everything done electronically today.

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6. We then moved into the 2000s when we focussed on **improving public service excellence**. We actively and concertedly shifted all e-feasible services online. More than 1,600 e-services were launched in the early 2000s. We also focussed on whole-of-government integration, to bring about better services to create greater convenience to the public, reduce processing time, and lower handling costs.

7. One decade later, we have reached a new phase in our journey. With a society that is more educated and matured, the orientation of our eGov strategy is changing from being purely a **“Government centric” one**, typical of a one-way service provider, to a **“Governance centric” one** that encourages, facilitates and co-creates with the public. With this as the backdrop, we launched the eGov2015 MasterPlan two years ago to create a collaborative Government, to harness the power of the masses to catalyse and sustain the next wave of innovation in public service delivery.

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But ...What's next?

8. Even as we celebrate our achievements today, it is timely to remind ourselves that our eGov objectives continue to be even more relevant and pertinent.

9. Many forces of change are upon us. The external environment is very volatile. Our operating context is getting more complex. With our high internet and mobile penetration rates¹, our citizens are getting more technologically savvy. Increasingly, they are not only transacting online but also 'on-the-go'. Expectations are rising. Our customers expect faster and more convenient services.

10. At the same time, we are facing manpower constraints economy-wide. As Government assists the private sector to rely less

on manpower, we must ourselves also "walk the talk" and set good examples in bridging the productivity gap. **We need to transform**

and deliver more value to the public, with the same or less resources. And e-Government has a critical role to play in helping us to overcome these challenges.

¹ Household access to Internet is over 85% (IDA's Annual Survey on Infocomm Usage, 2011), mobile penetration rate is about 152% (IDA's statistics on telecom services for 2012).

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How eGov can help in Government Transformation

11. I see scope for eGov to evolve in three aspects. First, we need to continue to adapt and leverage on new technology to drive innovation and improve productivity in public service delivery. Second, we need to drive further integration and apply a coordinated and customer-centric approach. Third, we need to harness the transformative power of data to catalyse new, inventive solutions, and together with society, achieve higher public value.

12. Let me elaborate on how we can work together on each of these aspects to support a high performance Government.

Leveraging on Technology to Drive Innovation & Productivity

13. We live in exciting times. Increasing smart phones and the widespread use of applications and social media have revolutionised the way we interact, and brought about unprecedented levels of communication and sharing. Technological breakthroughs in areas such as Big Data have also opened up boundless opportunities for us.

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14. How do we seize these new opportunities to achieve a quantum leap in our public service delivery, enhance our engagement with our customers, and improve the way we go about our daily work?

15. We need not look far. There are many local and overseas examples of how the innovative application of emerging technologies can help Government redefine how we work internally, and transform the ways we interact with the public.

16. Increasingly, Governments around the world are leveraging on technology to reap productivity gains. For example, automation of service frontlines through the use of self-help kiosks, and equipping frontline officers with mobile devices, can free up resources for Government to do more. In Sweden, home-care workers are equipped with mobile devices to record the status of elderly patients during their visits, which significantly reduce the effort required for paperwork and improved accuracy of data entry.²

17. Governments are not only moving services online, but also onto the mobile platform. For instance, through a parking program

² <http://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/stockholm-uses-city-wide-mobile-phone-system-document-elderly-care>

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introduced by the San Francisco government, drivers are now able to instantly identify available parking spots using their phones, saving time, stress, and reducing traffic jams in the city.³

18. In addition, many Governments are actively leveraging on mobile and social media platforms to crowd-source for information, ideas and feedback, and to engage citizens and encourage active citizenry.

19. Police departments all over the world are using mobile and social media to alert citizens of crimes and other potential dangers, as well as to enlist help on finding missing persons or suspects; it is also common to find interested groups working together with Government and even developing their own solutions to everyday

issues. The UK has a website called FixMyStreet⁴, which allows residents to conveniently report broken public infrastructure to the local authority.

20. Back home, I am pleased to note that our own agencies are also actively leveraging on mobile technology. There are many

³ <http://sfpark.org/about-the-project/>

⁴ <http://www.fixmystreet.com/>

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entries in the mobile category of today's Award, offering very comprehensive services to the public. For example, MyTransport.SG app provides the latest real-time traffic news and user-friendly navigation guides to help commuters and motorists make informed travel decisions. The Mobile@HDB app allows users to conveniently check sale launches and resale prices, renew season parking tickets, make housing instalment payments, and even look for places to shop while on the go. These are good, encouraging starts. We should push strongly ahead and do more.

Adopting a WOG approach – More Integration; Focussing on Customers

21. Aside from adopting new technologies, we can take our service delivery to the next level if we embrace a more collaborative and customer-centric approach.

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22. We need to be more integrated. Working in silos results in duplication and a less-than-optimal service standard across Government. We must break down these silos and avoid making customers "run from agency to agency".

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23. At the same time, we must ensure that our solutions are designed around the users' experience and meet their needs to reap the full benefits of our services.

24. We have been working towards that and projects such as the Online Business Licensing System (OBLS) and BCA's CORENET e-Information system are good testimonies that we can indeed work across boundaries. More agencies are also increasingly consulting their customers upfront in the product-design process.

25. We need to start by thinking, "What is it the customer wants?" as opposed to "This is what my agency wants." It will not be easy, as it often requires us to think out of the box, to change the processes that we are so familiar with. But this is necessary, if we want to become a high performance public service.

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**Harnessing the Transformative Power of Data to Achieve
Greater Public Value**

26. Last, I want to elaborate on our "Open Data" efforts. "Open Data" is a game-changer – if done well, it can transform our public service delivery. Already, private sector companies and governments

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around the world have embarked on their own “Open Data” efforts because they see the value it can bring to citizens and the competitive edge that it will give to their organisations.

27. This is progressively gaining traction amongst our public agencies. To date, our agencies have contributed to over 8,000 datasets on the data.gov.sg portal and over 50 map layers and themes on OneMap. Such data-sharing efforts contribute tremendously to improve service delivery. For instance, LTA’s data is used by many private developers to create popular transport-related applications like Gothere.sg and carpark@SG. Data-sharing between NEA and PUB also make possible the SMS alerts for flash flood and heavy rain warnings. We now have more than 100 apps available, created by both the public and private sectors, using Government data. We obviously want many more. We should not underestimate the collective power of the people and private sectors, when armed with good Government data, to create new, inventive solutions that help us solve some of our service delivery problems.

28. Let me share an example. At a recent apps competition organised by Google and supported by our data.gov.sg initiative, I

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was told that an innovative group of young polytechnic students, leveraging on transport data, invented an interesting app which has an alarm that wakes you up earlier should there be a traffic jam on the route that you were intending to take. It is also smart enough to suggest alternative routes with less traffic jam!

Productivity. Service Delivery. Data (Ideas4SG – Public Service Edition)

29. On this note, I am pleased to announce that the Government will be launching our very own internal crowd-sourcing competition, called “Ideas4SG”, in May this year. We strongly believe that public officers know the “business of Government” well and can provide valuable insights. So we want your ideas on how Government data can be used to improve the way we work, and our interactions with the public. MOF and IDA will be releasing more details on this competition in early May. I strongly encourage all of you to participate, be innovative and to push the boundaries.

Conclusion

30. There are many achievements to celebrate today. These inspiring successes show us how technology can be used in simple

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but important ways. We need to work together, be creative to think of wider possibilities, and redefine our work processes. While technology provides the platform, it is our collaborative approach and unceasing innovation that allow us to recognise and capture opportunities and translate them into higher-level outcomes. We have done well, but there is clearly room for us to strive to do better.

31. In closing, let me once again congratulate the winning teams. Keep up the good work. Thank you.

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