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SPEECH BY MOS TAN AT THE PLENARY DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO) DIRECTOR - GENERAL - “BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE WITH DECENT WORK: TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC” ON 7 DEC 2016, 11.40AM AT THE ILO’S 16TH ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING

Mr Chairperson
Director-General
Distinguished delegates

1. On behalf of the Singapore tripartite delegation, I thank the Indonesian Government for hosting the 16th APRM in Bali and we appreciate your warm hospitality accorded to all of us.

2. In his report, the Director-General has called on us to strive towards inclusive and sustainable growth. He has highlighted three key areas in doing this:

3. One, achieve job-rich economic growth.

4. Two, prepare for the future with the skills needed to boost income and productivity.

5. Three, harness the power of tripartism.

6. Ladies and gentlemen, Singapore fully supports this call to action.

7. Technology, as the Director-General highlights, is one key driver affecting the future of work. It presents challenges but also opportunities.

8. Every nation must therefore decide and choose how to deal with technology. In Singapore, we have decided to choose to embrace it. We see technology as a partner in sustainable and inclusive growth. Let me share three key thrusts on how we are preparing for the future of technological changes.

9. First, we are transforming our economy, to create industries and jobs of the future. Our Industry Transformation Maps help companies and industries create new value and drive growth – sector by sector, for more than 20 sectors, covering more than 80% of our economy. We believe that continuous restructuring is the best way to enhance our competitiveness and to remain relevant to the global economy.

10. Second, we are enhancing workforce employability; equipping our workers with skills of the future. This ensures that our workforce keeps up with the industry transformation.

- a. Our Sectoral Manpower Plans map out the manpower and skills needed for each sector. They also set out a strategy to develop these skills in our workforce.

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- b. To put these manpower plans into action, we have implemented our nationwide SkillsFuture initiative. SkillsFuture enables individuals to take ownership of their skillsets and careers. It also fosters a culture of lifelong learning. While in school, individuals are guided to discover their interest and choose their educational and academic pathways. Throughout their careers in their working life, individuals continue to deepen their skills through courses provided by training institutions.

11. Third, we are leveraging technology to keep our workforce inclusive and productive.

- a. Our workforce is aging. We are raising our re-employment age from 65 today to 67 in the middle of next year. Our workplaces must be age-friendly – using technology to make our jobs safer, easier and smarter.
- b. Our population growth is also slowing. To encourage higher birthrates, we must make our workplaces more family-friendly. For example, through providing flexible work arrangements.
- c. Technology is displacing old jobs but at the same time also creating new ones. We must re-create low-wage work into better-paying jobs with more pervasive use of technology.
- d. Only by doing all these can we strive for inclusive growth for all our workers.

12. These three key thrusts cannot be achieved without the concerted efforts of all the stakeholders. This is why tripartism is so important and that is also at the heart of our efforts. Going forward, there are serious challenges facing Singapore. For example, drawing up the Industry Transformation Maps and Sectoral Manpower Plans. Identifying the skills that SkillsFuture needs to impart to our workers for the future. Keeping our workforce inclusive. To overcome all these challenges Our tripartite partners – industries, unions and government agencies – must work closely together, at both the national level and the sectoral level to secure our future together.

13. And in this respect, we are of the view that the Director-General's call to action deserves all nations' full support, and Singapore will play our part to support this call. We look forward to learning about other nations' experience in building an inclusive future with decent work for the workers.

14. With this, I thank you for giving me the time to speak. Thank you.