

**SPEECH BY MR KHAW BOON WAN, COORDINATING MINISTER FOR
INFRASTRUCTURE AND MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
AT THE MOT FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD CEREMONY
ON 28 JULY 2017 AT 6.30PM AT HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL**

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1 Good evening. First, let me congratulate our 26 undergraduate and 8 postgraduate scholars. It is a happy occasion for all of you and I am glad your parents and loved ones are here to share your joy too.

2 MOT introduced the Beacon Scholarship in 2010 to bring the various scholarships offered by MOT agencies under a single banner. This is the eighth year MOT is awarding the Beacon Scholarships. To date, we have awarded 223 scholarships.

3 The Beacon Scholarship offers challenging and meaningful careers within the MOT Family. You will have the opportunity to shape transport policies and make a positive difference to Singaporeans' lives. You can also look forward to good opportunities for advancement as well as potential inter-agency postings within the MOT Family.

The Evolving Role of Transport and the Need to Attract Talent

4 The transport sector is a critical sector of our economy, connecting people and businesses within Singapore and to the world, and creating quality jobs for Singaporeans.

5 For example, aviation contributes 6% of our GDP and 160,000 jobs. The Changi Airport is a Singapore icon and our pride. But we are not complacent. To sustain Changi's continued competitiveness, we are upgrading our infrastructure, with T4 opening this year, Jewel in 2019, and T5 in time to come.

6 On the maritime side of the house, our Port is another Singapore icon. Although shipping is going through a down cycle, we are confident of its long term prospects. That is why we are building a mega port at Tuas, and aggressively pursuing technology to boost productivity, to create new and higher paying jobs.

7 Close to home, land transport is an integral part of our daily commute. Each day, over 8 million passenger trips are made on our public transport network. By 2030, our rail network will double its length to 360km, and allow 8 in 10 families to be within walking distance of a train station. This will support our move towards a car-lite Singapore, and make public, shared and active transport the way of life for Singaporeans. Meanwhile technology, like electric driverless vehicles, and the sharing economy, like Uber and obike, are changing the way we move about. Singapore is among the few cities in the world with many trials on these new technologies and transport options. We are part of a global transport revolution which is making a difference to the quality of life of city folks. It is exciting and fulfilling!

8 It is therefore critical for MOT to attract our fair share of talent and build up a pool of capable officers who are able to seize these opportunities and spearhead these developments to build a smarter transport system.

2017 Cohort of Beacon Scholars

9 Thus, our scholarship selection process is rigorous. Every year, less than 2% of applications are successful. We look not only at academic results, but also for individuals with the character, drive and motivation to change the world!

10 Take for instance Ip Georges Christophe, a CAAS Scholar who will be pursuing an Economics degree at the University of California. Georges collaborated with different social agencies to provide family photo-shoots for low-income families, in the belief that family portraits serve as an important memento for these families to look back on fondly and bind them closer together. In this way, Georges made a difference to the lives of these families.

11 Johnathan Peh, a LTA scholar, had a troubled school history. In his secondary school days, Johnathan was heavily addicted to computer games, which took a toll on his studies. Fortunately, Jonathan found his passion in civil engineering and went on to excel in polytechnic, emerging as the valedictorian in his cohort, and going on to obtain a place at Imperial College. Jonathan's example shows that perseverance pays.

12 Let me also thank our eight postgraduate scholars for your dedication to the MOT Family. Each of you has contributed significantly to the MOT Family and proven yourself deserving of the scholarship. I look forward to your continued contributions to the MOT Family upon your return.

A Meaningful Career to Look Forward to

13 Meanwhile, our returned Beacon scholars are doing well, making valuable contributions in their portfolios. All have been involved in exciting jobs that have grown them professionally.

14 Melinda Chan, a scholar from the 2012 cohort, is an Assistant Manager in the Research and Technology and Industry Development (RTID) Division at MPA. Melinda enjoys many development opportunities as a Beacon Scholar. These range from doing internships and attending international conferences to working alongside the industry's brightest. In return, Melinda stretches herself to give of her best in the formulation of policies and programmes for the maritime industry.

15 Similarly, I trust that our scholars here with us tonight will do us proud and make valuable contributions to the MOT Family upon your return.

Conclusion

16 In closing, I would like to thank parents, principals and teachers for the vital role you played. Without your nurturing and guidance, our scholars would not be where they are today.

17 To our scholars, stay grounded and be humble, and never forget those who have helped you along the way. I wish you all the very best in your studies, and in your future careers in the MOT Family.

National Archives of Singapore

18 Thank you.

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