

SPEECH BY MR NG CHEE MENG, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) AND SECOND MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, AT THE AVIATION OPEN HOUSE 2017, ON THURSDAY 24 AUGUST 2017, AT SUNTEC CITY CONVENTION CENTRE

Friends of the aviation community,
Educators,
Students,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Good morning. I'm glad to see so many of you here for the Open House.

Exciting time to join Singapore Aviation

2. Singapore has come a long way since the opening of Kallang Airport, our first civil airport, in 1936.

- Today, the aviation industry plays a key role in Singapore's economy – contributing 6 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and providing more than 160,000 jobs.
- Changi Airport is also well known around the world, and has won more than 500 international awards.
- It is the sixth busiest for international traffic, serving more than 56 million passengers every year, and handling over 1.8 million tonnes of airfreight.

- We take pride in our strong connectivity, with over 100 airlines linking Singapore to some 380 cities in about 90 countries worldwide.

3. In the next few years, we will see Changi transform significantly to prepare for the future. The theme of this year's Open House – “Be the Future of Aviation” – reflects our wish to get more Singaporeans to join us on this journey.

4. There are, for instance, many infrastructure developments underway.

- Terminal 4 will open by the end of this year, and Changi Jewel in 2019.
- We are also developing a third runway, Terminal 5, as well as an expanded industry and logistics zone at Changi East.

5. In the air passenger, air cargo and aerospace sectors, we are also in the midst of exciting transformation to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.

- In the process, there will be many new jobs for Singaporeans.
- These include more engineers and project managers, and new jobs like autonomous vehicle fleet controllers.

6. CAAS is also working closely with the companies to redesign existing airport jobs, and to raise productivity. What this means is that our workers can look forward to better paying jobs, and less physically taxing roles.

- The recent introduction of new technologies like mobile devices, smart wearables, robotic equipment and autonomous vehicles, is already changing the face of air transport jobs.
- We can look forward to more transformation projects like tracking of baggage, cargo and equipment across the airport in real time, digitising work processes, and predictive maintenance.
- With the greater use of technology and jobs upskilling, our workers will also benefit from enhanced roles, and hence improved salaries and career progression.

7. Take Mr John Chow, a technician at SIA Engineering Company (SIAEC).

- John is responsible for pushback operations at Changi Airport. Pushback is a pre take-off procedure wherein the aircraft is pushed backwards away from the airport gate.
- This used to be a three-man operation. John would communicate with the pilot, while a second colleague manually drove the tractor which tows the aircraft. A third colleague would marshal the aircraft.
- Today, John also remotely controls an electric tractor towing the aircraft, while communicating with the pilot. A technology-based redesign of the job has improved the productivity of the pushback operation by a third, and enhancing the value of John's job.
- John's job is but one of many evolving ones in aviation. We can count on having even more good jobs to come.

8. I am also pleased to note that wages in the air transport sector – already competitive when benchmarked nationally – are continuing to improve. Based on CAAS' latest manpower survey, the median gross monthly salaries for our workers in apron, cargo, catering and passenger services were higher than the national median gross monthly salary in 2016, by margins ranging from 3 to 13 per cent.

Grooming talent through professional aviation training

9. As the industry transforms, so must the way we prepare and train new entrants.

- A programme through which we do this, is the Professional Conversion Programmes (PCP) under Workforce Singapore's (WSG) Adapt and Grow initiative.
- Under the PCP, new Ground Operations Officers, Station Managers and Airline Officers begin their aviation careers with both classroom as well as structured on-the-job training.

10. Another initiative is the SkillsFuture Earn-and-Learn Programme (ELP) for the Air Transport Sector.

- The programme hones the capabilities of ITE graduates on-the-job, complemented with classroom-based skills development.
- Participants can attain relevant Modular Certificates or even Diploma qualifications through the ELP.

11. Pre-employment training programmes such as Higher National Institute of Technical Education Certificate (NITEC) in Passenger Services, Diploma in Aviation Management and the planned Air Transport Degree will further bolster the aviation pipeline.

- I strongly encourage students to consider taking up one of these aviation programmes, to acquire and master skills that can land them a good job.

12. Today, I am happy to announce that the inaugural intake for the new Higher NITEC in Airport Operations programme, will begin in April 2018.

- This is the second Higher NITEC offering for the air transport sector.

13. To ensure that the curriculum meets both students' developmental needs and the requirements of the sector, the programme was developed in consultation with industry partners like SATS and dnata.

- Students will have a holistic development through a balance of classroom and on-the-job training with these two ground-handling companies.

Nurturing our next generation of young aviators

14. Besides job skills training for workers, CAAS also runs a wide range of outreach initiatives to interest youths in aviation.

- For example, Aviation Learning Journeys give students a first-hand glimpse into aviation work environments, while Inspiring Aviators Talks engage them through sharing by outstanding aviation professionals.
- With over 44,000 followers, CAAS' Facebook page, "We are Aviators", is also a great resource for all things aviation. If you aren't already on board, come be a part of our online aviator movement today!

15. CAAS also works with schools to create aviation-infused environments to deepen interest in aviation.

- One example is the Aviation in Schools Initiative (ASI), which supports schools in developing and implementing programmes or activities that promote interest in aviation and aviation careers.

16. In addition, CAAS has partnered the Singapore Scout Association (SSA) since 2012 to design and organise aviation-related programmes for Air Scouts as well as non-Scout youths.

- This programme houses initiatives like the Young Aviator Badge, Air Proficiency Badge and aviation workshops, to name a few.

17. The partnership with SSA has been very fruitful.

- Over the past five years, we have established three new school-based and two community-run Air Scout units.¹

¹ The three school-based Air Scout units are from Hillgrove Secondary School, the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College Central and the School of Science and Technology, Singapore (SST), while the two community-run units are "Black Knights" and "Soaring Eagles". These community-run units are for students whose schools do not offer the Air Scout programme as a Co-Curricular Activity (CCA).

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- More than 1,000 students have been enrolled in the Young Aviator Badge programme and close to 400 in the Air Proficiency Badge programme.
18. I am therefore happy that CAAS will be renewing the partnership with SSA.
- If you are interested in aviation, I invite you to take up membership with an Air Scout unit to embark on an aviation journey, and learn about air traffic control, to flight safety and airmanship.

Conclusion

19. On this note, let me once again encourage all our youths and workers who are considering career options, to join us to explore the exciting skies ahead, chart the future of Singapore Aviation together, and discover its many rewards.
20. I wish everyone a fruitful time at the Aviation Open House.
21. Thank you.

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