

**SPEECH BY MR DESMOND LEE, MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT AND SECOND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SINGAPORE GREEN BUILDING WEEK ON 12 SEP 2017, 9 AM, AT THE SANDS EXPO & CONVENTION CENTRE, CASSIA MAIN ROOM**

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Ladies and gentlemen

**Reducing Singapore's Carbon Emissions through Green Buildings**

1 A very good morning and welcome to all our international friends from around the world. I am delighted to be here with you at the opening of the Singapore Green Building Week 2017.

2 Climate change is in the global spotlight. We see its effects all around us. Countries are getting hotter and we are experiencing more unpredictable weather. Catastrophic weather events like hurricanes and prolonged floods can cause loss of lives, damage to property and economic harm to businesses and livelihoods. Such extreme weather events are expected to become more commonplace as the climate becomes wetter and warmer.

3 The threat of sea-level rise due to climate change is especially pertinent to Singapore. The inundation of our coastlines is not just an inconvenience to those living near the coast. But for a small island state like ours, it can even pose an existential threat.

4 The need to address the global challenge posed by climate change is urgent, and requires will and collective global action. Singapore will continue to play our part – small though we may be.

5 Our target is to reduce our carbon emissions intensity by 36% from 2005 levels by the time we reach 2030. One of our key strategies is to improve energy efficiency in buildings. This is because up to a quarter of our carbon emissions come from our buildings. So we have made it a priority to “green” our buildings. Allow me to share some of our experience thus far.

### **Our Green Building Journey**

6 Some of you would have heard of our Green Mark scheme. This Green Mark scheme was established in 2005 by the Singapore Building and Construction Authority (BCA) as a set of environmental sustainability standards for buildings.

7 11 years ago, our Green Mark focussed on encouraging stakeholders to green our new buildings. This was our first Green Building Master Plan. In 2009, we started pushing for the greening of our existing buildings, as part of our second Master Plan. Three years ago, we launched the third Green Building Master Plan with the aim of becoming a global leader in green buildings, with particular expertise in the tropics and sub-tropical regions.

8 Today, about a third of our buildings meet the minimum Green Mark Certified standard. We want to raise this to 80% by 2030. In 2016, Singapore was honoured to be placed amongst the top 3 cities in the world for green buildings, along with Paris and London. The BCA Green Mark certification has also gone international. BCA has received more than 300 BCA Green Mark applications for projects in more than 80 cities in 14 countries.

## Sustaining the Momentum

9 We want to sustain this momentum. I will highlight four ways that we will do so.

10 First, we will pilot a set of revised criteria for the BCA Green Mark Scheme for Existing Non-Residential Buildings this year. This revamp was developed because of feedback we had received from industry stakeholders. Essentially, the revised criteria will place greater emphasis on sustainable building management, health and well-being of building occupants, as well as smart controls. We will conduct a workshop on the highlights of the revised criteria as part of this Conference.

11 On a related note, we are now developing a new Green Mark scheme. This new scheme aims to get our companies to consider the health and well-being of their building occupants when designing interior fit-outs and provisions for their offices, as well as workplace health programmes and policies for their employees. BCA and the Health Promotion Board are cooperating on this, and we will put out more details next year when we are ready.

12 Second, we will make use of technology to make our buildings even more energy-efficient. To help us achieve this, we are working with research institutions to develop a roadmap to achieve Positive Energy low-rise buildings, Zero Energy medium-rise buildings, and Super Low Energy high-rise buildings. This will help us meet the growing demand for smarter and greener buildings in our tropical and urban context.

13 Third, we will intensify our efforts to strengthen and grow our green-collar workforce. Today, the industry has around 16,000 professionals, managers, executives, and technicians in the green workforce. To support the growth of our green industry, BCA targets to increase our green collar workforce to 25,000 by 2025.

14 And fourth, we will improve information transparency on building energy performance. We had asked commercial building owners whether they will voluntarily disclose their building energy performance data. The vast majority were supportive. So we will start to release this information right from this week. You can access it online

from the Singapore Open Data Portal and BCA's Building Energy Submission System. We hope that this will raise awareness and spur all building owners to do more to improve their energy performance.

### **Facilitating Stakeholder Collaboration**

15 Together, these strategies will provide a push for our green buildings movement. While we will obviously need the support of all stakeholders to make this work, the Government will try its best to facilitate. For instance, we made a push last year to green our existing schools, under the BCA-MOE Back to School Programme. We also stepped up student engagement and grooming of our future green professionals. We believe that this transformation needs to start when a person is young.

16 Under this programme, tertiary level students are given the opportunity to act as consultants to help their alma maters attain BCA Green Mark certification. Some have even conducted outreach activities to raise awareness about environmental sustainability amongst students and staff, including their former teachers.

17 Four of these participants – Gordon Lim, Tng Jie Min, Zoe Cheng, and Xue Jiade – received the IES Prestigious Engineering Achievement Award in the Special Awards category this year for their contributions through the programme. This recognition is well-deserved, as all four of their alma maters have now attained BCA Green Mark certification. These are young people who have made a real difference to their schools and to environment sustainability. Well done and congratulations to all four of them!

18 Building on the programme, we have enhanced it this year to welcome industry partners as mentors to share their work experience with our students. Six green-minded firms have already come on board. We welcome greater involvement from schools and partners in industry alike to continue to grow this programme.

## **Concluding Remarks**

19 Let me conclude by thanking all our partners for your support throughout this journey to a more sustainable Singapore. As I have said earlier, it is only by working together that we can sustain our progress and make this work. I look forward to our continued collaboration as we tackle this global challenge together. I wish all of you a good conference. Thank you.

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