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Chairman, Building and Construction Authority

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President, Singapore Green Building Council

Ms Debbie Evans
President, Reed Exhibitions South East Asia/Australia

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen.

A very good morning to all of you.

I thank the Building and Construction Authority for inviting me to this official launch ceremony. It is a great honour to have this opportunity to speak to and meet with leaders and stakeholders of the built environment sector.

Climate Change and our Nation's Approach

2 As we all know, global climate change is something that is scientifically proven and will affect us each and every one of us, wherever in the world we may live or work. In launching the Clean Power Plan for the US last month, President Obama even called it the greatest threat to the future of our planet, so its challenges are both imminent and ominous. Consequently, it makes very good sense for every one of us to reduce our carbon footprint as much as possible and help to mitigate the negative effects of climate change on ourselves and our planet.

3 Later this year, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (or UNFCCC COP21) will take place in Paris, where we hope to see all countries agreeing to create a new post-2020 agreement to reduce global carbon emissions. For Singapore, we are also playing our role and have submitted our Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (or INDC) in July. In it, we have indicated our intention to reduce our emissions intensity by 36% from 2005 levels by 2030, and to stabilise emissions with the aim of peaking around that same time. This is a tough commitment for Singapore to meet, but it is in our opinion, one that is necessary.

The Criticality of Built Environment to Sustainability

4 To fulfil this commitment, the built environment sector will have an important role to play. Constructing and operating buildings and infrastructure are undoubtedly energy and carbon intensive activities. In fact, in cities worldwide including Singapore, buildings contribute to about a third of all global greenhouse gas emissions, and make up nearly 40% of global energy consumption. The sector must therefore continue to demonstrate leadership in pursuing sustainability efforts.

5 For Singapore, we started our green building movement a decade ago. Through BCA's Green Building Masterplans and the Green Mark scheme, bold targets and initiatives were articulated, and comprehensive measures were laid out to spur the building and development sector towards becoming greener. BCA also fostered close collaborations with the industry to drive progress and push the boundaries. Today, close to a third of the nation's building stock have already been greened, totalling about 70 million square metres of total gross floor area.

Going beyond the decade of leadership in sustainability

6 While Singapore has enjoyed a successful decade of leadership in sustainability, we must continue these efforts and spur even more stakeholders to improve building energy efficiency and further reduce energy consumption. To do so, we can further leverage on technologies to generate new solutions and overcome constraints. We can also do more to engage building users to understand, appreciate and embrace necessary behavioural change to be more environmentally-friendly. I am pleased to announce some new efforts by BCA.

Announcement 1 – Release of the BCA Building Energy Benchmarking Report (BEBR) 2015

7 To further our efforts in mitigating the effects of climate change, BCA took an important first step towards publicising building energy consumption last year with the release of the inaugural Building Energy Benchmarking Report (or BEBR). The report helps building owners get a sense of their energy performance and how they fare as compared to buildings of similar types and sizes.

8 The second report, the 2015 version, will be officially released today. I am happy to share three key insights from this report. Firstly, there is a positive trend that commercial buildings show better energy performance in 2014 than in 2013, with retail buildings showing the most improvement. Secondly, commercial buildings certified to Green Mark standards are found to have sustained better energy performance than non-certified ones, with energy savings as high as 15%. Thirdly, tenants continue to consume as much energy as their landlords in buildings, reaffirming the potential for tenants to play more active roles in improving the performance of their premises. These are useful sign posts for the built environment sector to build upon.

Announcement 2 – Launch of the BCA Green Mark 2015

9 For the last decade, BCA's Green Mark scheme has been instrumental in guiding the design, construction and operation of buildings towards enhanced energy performance.

10 I am pleased to announce that BCA has holistically reframed and enhanced the scheme, and today, we will see the launch of the BCA Green Mark 2015. This reframed Green Mark scheme places focus on climatically responsive design, energy effectiveness, greater focus on health and wellbeing, smart technologies and a systematic approach to address embodied carbon and other resources.

11 This is by far the most consultative Green Mark scheme as it involved the participation of more than 100 industry specialists and experienced practitioners, complemented by extensive consultation with industry bodies and academia.

12 This new scheme provides a platform to recognise and make mainstream the leadership needed to drive high performance in green buildings. I am confident that the Green Mark 2015 is set to be a game-changer in raising the level of sustainability in the built environment.

Announcement 3 – Soft Launch of the BCA SkyLab

13 In the realm of research, BCA has set a goal towards achieving "low-energy high-rise" and "zero-energy low-rise" buildings within our tropical context. BCA started leading the industry in research and development back in 2009 with the completion of its Zero Energy Building at the BCA Academy. Last year, BCA launched the \$52million R&D fund for the Green Building Innovation Cluster. Today, I am pleased to announce another milestone research facility – the "World's First High-Rise Rotatable Laboratory for the Tropics".

14 This new test facility, to be called the "BCA SkyLab", is a collaboration between BCA and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California, US. Built on the roof-top of a building at the BCA Academy, the BCA SkyLab is a state-of-the-art facility for the research, testing and development of energy-efficient building technologies. The lab is fully rotatable to any orientation to the sun, and will allow innovative technologies to be tested on a plug-and-play basis and carried out in high-rise, outdoor settings. The BCA SkyLab is set to start operations in the first half of next year.

Conclusion

15 I started off my speech talking about how important it is for every one of us to be committed to reducing our carbon footprint. I hope this Week's activities will help inspire us to spread the message of sustainability, not just to our working partners, but to our families and loved ones as well – everyone has a part to play. I wish all of you an exciting and productive week ahead in Singapore.

Thank you.