

Mr Ng Joo Hee,

CE, PUB,

Industry Partners,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1 A very good morning. Today is my first day officially as Minister for the Environment and Water Resources. It is apt that it starts with something which is so important for all of us, something that Singaporeans may take for granted – the water security, good, clean water supply, and also, more importantly, industry partners who take water efficiency very seriously. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to join you at this ceremony today as we recognise the outstanding efforts of our industry partners in their drive to improve water efficiency.

Managing Demand for Water Sustainability

2 This year to date, we have already shared that we are experiencing lower than average rainfall in Singapore. In fact, this weather pattern is going around the whole world, where there ought not to be rain, there are floods, and where we expect rain, it is not falling. Over in Johor, the dry weather has also seen water levels in Linggiu Reservoir dip to unprecedented low levels. Linggiu Reservoir regulates the flow in Johor River, from which we extract water for treatment and supply to Singapore. The prevailing El Nino is expected to exacerbate the drier weather in the region, which means is that we have to watch our water stock very closely. While our strategy of diversification through having Four National Taps provides Singapore with a robust and sustainable water supply both now and in the longer term, our growing water demand needs to be managed carefully. Every individual, every organization needs to use water wisely and conserve our precious water resources.

3 Today, the domestic sector in Singapore accounts for 45% of our water consumption, with the non-domestic sector accounting for the remaining 55%. We forecast, by 2060, the total water demand in Singapore is expected to double and the non-domestic sector will account for 70% of the demand.

4 PUB has put in place comprehensive initiatives to educate, support and recognise water users in their journey to improve water efficiency. One such initiative is the mandatory Water Efficiency Management Plan (WEMP), which PUB introduced last year. It is meant to enable businesses to better understand, to be more aware of, and more importantly, to take greater ownership of their own water usage.

5 Under this programme, all large water users - those consuming at least 60,000 cubic meters of water per year - are required to submit their Water Efficiency Management Plans to PUB on an annual basis. These companies are also required to monitor the breakdown of their water usage via the installation of private water meters. With this information, businesses can study their water usage patterns and target their water intensive operations to improve water efficiency and save on their water bills.

6 A total of 639 large water users have developed and submitted their Water Efficiency Management Plans to PUB this year. The data presented in the WEMP will provide useful insights for PUB to develop benchmarks as well as best practices for specific industries. This information will be shared across the sectors to encourage users to strive for even higher water efficiency.

PUB's Water Efficient Building Certification

7 Another measure to encourage water efficiency is the Water Efficient Building (Basic) Certification or WEB (Basic) Certification, introduced in 2004. This certification encourages businesses and industries to implement water efficient measures in their premises and processes. Today, more than 2,700 owners and managers of buildings or premises have improved water efficiency simply by installing water efficient fittings and adopting water efficient flow rates/flush volumes. A certified water efficient building can save about five per cent of their monthly water consumption.

WEB (Gold/Silver) Certification

8 To further enhance the WEB (Basic) Certification, PUB introduced the WEB Gold and Silver Certification two years ago to recognise organisations that have put in place water efficiency management systems and shown exemplary water efficiency performance.

9 This year, out of the 16 organisations that will be awarded the WEB (Gold/Silver) certification, 6 have attained GOLD for their outstanding efforts. The recipients span the various sectors including office buildings/mixed developments, hotels, schools, pharmaceutical companies and the public sector.

10 For example, Ocean Financial Centre features a myriad of sustainable water efficiency measures such as the harvesting of rainwater for irrigation of their rooftop gardens, recycling condensate water for the cooling tower and using water-efficient tap fittings. I am told that these efforts were put in place at the design stage and implemented since its inception, which contribute towards savings of 42 million litres of water annually. This is about 17 Olympic sized swimming pools if we fill it to the full, and this also means 17 Olympic sized swimming pools of water saved!

11 In addition, they have water meters at key common areas and a fault reporting system to ensure minimal wastage of precious water. They also encourage their tenants to play their part in reducing their water consumption through the production and distribution of a green guide for all tenants.

12 Another recipient, from the Silver Category, Abbott Manufacturing has achieved a 5.4% reduction in total water consumption as compared to the previous year. This water efficiency improvement is aligned to their 2020 target of reducing their water usage by 30%.

13 In the last 2 years, PUB has recognised 11 WEB (Gold) recipients and 40 WEB (Silver) recipients for their exemplary performance in water efficiency. The efforts by our recipients are truly commendable.

Conclusion

14 Once again, I would like to offer my congratulations to all the 16 recipients today. You have all done well and I encourage you to continue with the good job and share your best practices with others and make water conservation a natural part of your business. Be our water ambassador, urge your partners and stakeholders in your value chain to do likewise. Achieving a sustainable level of water consumption requires the commitment of all the industries, all our community and every individual. All of us can do more. Every effort and commitment goes a long way to help us conserve our precious water and achieve water sustainability.

15 I wish all of you a pleasant day ahead.

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