

Mr Ho Meng Kit,
Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Business Federation

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I am delighted to join all of you this evening to honour the winners of the Singapore Sustainability Awards 2015. Since 2010, the Awards have served to promote sustainability excellence amongst the public and private sectors in Singapore.

2. I wish to congratulate the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) for continuing to attract high calibre companies to participate in the awards each year. It is encouraging to see applicants from a wide range of industries, and that they have come forward not just to be recognised for their exemplary sustainability efforts, but also to share their best practices. This is important as environmental, economic and social sustainability are key to the long-term success of businesses.

3. The intent of the Singapore Sustainability Awards is to showcase the synergy between the environment and business success. This year, SBF has introduced a new category, the Green Technology Awards, which aim to recognise excellence in the “enabler” community. These are companies that provide best-in-class green technology solutions, meeting sustainability needs of the business, environment and society. Some of these companies will be recognised today for their contributions. I hope that more firms will start thinking about incorporating green technologies into their business practices, and create a more sustainable future for us.

Singapore Sustainability Label

4. Tonight, we will also see the official launch of the Singapore Sustainability Label, a new accreditation scheme for sustainable business practices. The Label given out by SBF complements the existing Singapore Sustainability Awards by providing an additional platform for organisations to benchmark their good practices. It is meant to recognise and encourage companies which may not meet the full requirements for the awards, but possess a strong potential to improve. The Label will also benefit companies that are looking to venture into international markets with strict regulatory standards, as it will enable companies to differentiate themselves and stand out in the region.

A Leading Green Economy

5. Just as the Label provides a roadmap for organisations to improve their sustainability efforts, the Government launched the Sustainable Singapore

Blueprint 2015 in November last year as a national guide for sustainability. This blueprint provides an outline of our national vision to create a more liveable and sustainable future for Singaporeans through a multi-pronged approach. For example, one of the plans is to create living labs to test-bed ideas that will improve lives whilst conserving the environment. In fact, given our high-density urban setting, Singapore is well placed to serve as a platform for companies and research organisations to develop solutions for environmental sustainability. Just last month, the Building and Construction Authority launched a new high rise rotating laboratory for the testing and development of new green building technologies. When ready in the first half of 2016, the lab will facilitate the research, development and application of energy-efficient building technologies.

6. With a pragmatic approach towards governance and implementation, as well as building capacity through collaborative partnerships, Singapore has enjoyed a successful decade of leadership in sustainability. Our country has benefitted much from the assistance extended by many developed countries and international organisations. As Singapore continues to grow in this area, we endeavour to help the developing nations of the world. This is why we started the Singapore Cooperation Programme, or SCP, in 1992 to transfer our developmental experience and knowledge to other nations.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

7. In September this year, UN member states officially adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit. World leaders pledged to undertake common action across 17 sustainable development goals. These goals are a new, universal set of targets that will frame national agendas over the next 15 years. They will expand on the millennium development goals and promote collective action amongst the UN member states. With this uniform set of goals, countries will have to be selective in choosing to adapt solutions that align well with their national priorities.

8. To support the 2030 Agenda, we are pleased to launch the new Sustainable Development Programme under the SCP. We will collaborate with other nations to develop capacity at three levels. First, at the senior leadership level, leadership programmes on Good Governance will be offered. Second, at the policy-design level, a long-term programme on sustainable cities and urbanisation will be provided for cities from the developing regions. Third, at the ground-implementation level, training will be rolled out on delivering solutions in water and sanitation for countries in need. These programmes require deeper commitment and partnerships with all stakeholders – government, international organisations, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. We look forward to guiding Singapore's development following the 2030 Agenda with our fellow nations.

Conclusion

9. Today, with rapid urbanisation and globalisation worldwide, it is important for the Singapore business community to leverage available platforms for green growth opportunities. In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of SBF and industry partners in promoting the awareness and practice of sustainable development among businesses in Singapore. The Singapore Sustainability Awards presented tonight is an important initiative which can help companies that are looking to internationalise and clinch international projects.

10. Through the concerted efforts of our community, there is much potential for Singapore to become a leading hub for sustainable development practices and innovative green business solutions.

11. To the award winners, my heartiest congratulations. I hope that many more organisations will follow your lead in implementing best practices in sustainable development.

Thank you, and I wish you all an enjoyable evening.

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