

Dr Michael Witter
Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Singapore

Mr Norbert Rethmann
Founder and Chairman of the Rethmann Group

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. A very good morning to everyone. I am pleased to be here today to witness the inauguration of the Metal Recovery Facility by REMEX Minerals Singapore Pte Ltd.

2. Singapore faces unique challenges in waste management, given the scarcity of land here and the increasing amount of solid waste generated each year. Currently, about 38% of solid waste generated in Singapore is incinerated at our four incineration plants. The resulting incineration bottom ash, or IBA for short, together with non-incinerable waste, are sent to Semakau Landfill for disposal. At the current rate of waste generation and incineration, Semakau Landfill, which is our only landfill, is expected to run out of space in 2035. Hence, the reduction of waste to be disposed of is a strategic concern for Singapore.

3. The REMEX Metal Recovery Facility is a critical component of our long-term plan to work towards becoming a Zero Waste Nation, a key theme under the Sustainable Singapore Blueprint 2015 which outlines our plans for a more liveable and sustainable Singapore. The opening of this facility therefore marks a significant milestone in our efforts towards a Zero Waste Nation.

4. Our incineration plants today have conventional magnetic separators that are only able to recover larger pieces of ferrous metals. However, with the metal recovery facility in operation, we can now recover smaller pieces of ferrous metals as well as non-ferrous metals which were previously not recovered. The resultant IBA could then possibly be further treated to be used as materials for road construction and land reclamation, like what is being done in Japan and the Netherlands. What this means is that we will be able to further extend the lifespan of Semakau Landfill once more if the IBA can be reused instead of being disposed of at the landfill.

5. The birth of this first-of-its-kind facility in Singapore is a fine example of how we harness technology to implement innovative solutions in waste management. It also shows how the Government and industry partners can work together to mitigate challenges and achieve our environmental goals.

6. I would like to congratulate REMEX and NEA on today's occasion. Especially to the project team, your dedication and commitment has been instrumental to the realisation of this milestone. REMEX is an established player in Europe for metal recovery from IBA. I am confident that their experience in such operations will help ensure the success of this facility in the years ahead.

7. Notwithstanding such technological solutions to manage solid waste, working towards becoming a Zero Waste Nation requires a multi-prong and holistic approach in waste management. Businesses and the community have an active role to play in reducing waste and increasing reuse and recycling.

8. To this end, I would like to invite businesses and the community to join us in a series of engagement sessions in January 2016 at the Future of Us exhibition, to help Singapore realise our plans to work towards becoming a Zero Waste Nation. Let us all do our part to conserve our resources, and create a more liveable and sustainable environment for our future generations to enjoy.

Thank you, and I wish you all a great day ahead.

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