

ITE 16/15/03

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ADDRESS BY DR LAW SONG SENG, DIRECTOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF ITE, AT THE ITE GRADUATION CEREMONY 1999 HELD AT THE KALLANG THEATRE ON FRI 1 OCT 99 AT 1500 HOURS

Welcome to the ITE Graduation Ceremony 1999.

2 Today, we are very honoured to have with us, Dr Lee Boon Yang, Minister for Manpower as our Guest-of-Honour. On behalf of ITE, I would like to thank the Minister for accepting our invitation to grace this occasion and address our graduates.

3 This Ceremony marks the graduation of 5,144 graduates comprising full-time students and apprentices who have successfully completed their training in ITE for the academic year 1998/99.

4 Among this year's graduates, 287 will be receiving the Certificate of Merit (COM) for having distinguished themselves in their courses of study. Fifty eight of these COM holders will also be awarded medals for their outstanding performances. We extend our warmest congratulations to all graduands and award winners.

ITE's Achievements

5 Academic year 1998/99 was another year of significant change and progress for ITE. While we strove to be more responsive and relevant to the needs of our students, industry and community, we remained primarily focused in building ITE into an established post-secondary technical education institution.

6 Guided by the ITE 2000 Plan, much has been achieved over the past seven years. Many of the initiatives in course restructuring, physical upgrading and staff development have been successfully implemented. In particular, over 90% of ITE's intake now have a GCE 'O' or 'N' level qualification. And overall, ITE has exceeded its target of attracting more than 25% of a school cohort for technical

training. As such, ITE's enrolment reached an all-time high of 18,300 students in Jul 99.

7 In essence, we have succeeded in transforming ITE into a dynamic and progressive institution. Today, the Institute is viewed by many, including overseas educationists, as "best in class" in technical training. The system is characterised by its comprehensiveness in providing education and training to young people and working adults. Every school leaver or worker who has the aptitude and interest in technical education is assured of a training opportunity.

8 The most visible change is the emergence of a system of modern ITE institutes, well designed to support the training and development of our students. Because of their strategic locations, we have practically moved ITE training to the door step of school leavers and working adults. Members of the public, including parents, teachers and employers are pleasantly surprised by the comprehensive range of training facilities in these modern institutes. What they see have also effectively changed their perception of ITE and attitude towards technical training.

9 Complementing the physical facilities is a campus environment which supports the total development of our students. All students, regardless of their academic achievements, are given the opportunities to build up their self-confidence and self-esteem through a variety of enrichment programmes while they undertake technical training. For example, there are opportunities to lead through Student Councils, ECA Clubs and sports. Students run cooperative shops and participate in ITE student seminars. They exhibit their talents through music and arts in public performances. To us, every student matters. Each individual has his potential, abilities and talents. Each one should have the opportunity to develop into a knowledgeable, well-trained, active and confident citizen, ready to contribute to society and serve the community.

Lee Kuan Yew Awards

10 Given a supportive training environment and committed staff, ITE students have done well. There are many success stories. Some have chosen to progress to the polytechnics. Others establish their careers as technicians, engineers and managers. The more enterprising graduates have become successful technopreneurs in business and industry.

11 In recognising the important role of ITE students and their achievements, Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew donated a sum of \$555,000 from the proceeds of the special edition of his memoirs "The Singapore Story" in Nov 98 to ITE. We are grateful to Senior Minister Lee for his support and encouragement of our students. With this donation, ITE has established the "Lee Kuan Yew Awards for ITE Students" to recognise achievement and excellence of our students in Technical Training, Technology, ECA and Model Student/Apprenticeship. The Lee Kuan Yew gold medal for the most outstanding ITE graduate will be presented for the first time at this graduation ceremony. The other three Awards will be

presented at the annual ITE Institute Day function in April next year. I am confident that the Lee Kuan Yew Awards will further motivate and spur ITE students to even higher achievements.

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12 Building an institution is a continuous process. As we look beyond the year 2000, there will be new challenges and opportunities in a globally more integrated and knowledge-based economy. We have successfully established ITE as a post-secondary technical education institution. Our next vision is to build ITE into a world class institution for a knowledge-based economy.

13 Once again, congratulations to all our graduates. You have done well. We wish you success in your careers ahead.

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