

Date Published: 13 Sep 2010

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President of the Singapore Green Building Council

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Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1. It is my great pleasure to welcome our guests to the opening ceremony of the World Green Building International Congress, the Singapore Green Building Council's Green Building Conference, and BEX Asia Exhibition 2010.

These events are held in conjunction with the 2nd Singapore Green Building Week.

Importance of Buildings to Environmental Sustainability

2. Buildings are an essential component of our urban landscape and a key contributor towards our energy consumption.

According to a report by the United Nations Environment Programme published last year, buildings consume some 40% of our global energy used and contribute as much as a third of our global total carbon emissions.

The report also highlighted that if we do nothing to improve the environmental sustainability of our buildings, the carbon emissions from buildings will more than double in the next 20 years.

Here in Singapore, our buildings consume more than one-third of our total end-use electricity, and is the second largest consumer of electricity, after the industrial sector.

3. Singapore has taken pro-active steps to ensure our sustainable development.

We have set out strategies in the Sustainable Singapore Blueprint, launched in April 2009, to achieve a reduction in energy intensity by 20% from 2005 levels by 2020.

Every sector, transport, industry, households and the building sector will have to play their part to contribute collectively to our efforts in sustainable development.

4. The public sector is taking the lead in environmental sustainability, especially in the area of energy efficiency.

All large public sector buildings are scheduled to undergo energy audits by April 2012.

In addition, all new public sector buildings with more than 5000 sq metres of air-conditioned floor area must attain the Green Mark Platinum rating while existing public sector buildings with more than 10,000 sq metres of air-conditioned floor are required to attain the Green Mark Goldplus rating by 2020.

Moreover, public agencies are required to practice water efficiency, implement recycling programmes and attain the Eco-Office Green Office label by April 2012.

5. For the building sector, the Building and Construction Authority, or BCA in short, has outlined a roadmap in promoting sustainable development in the built environment of Singapore.

It consists of a holistic suite of promotional, educational, engagement and regulatory measures.

For example, we have raised the minimum energy efficiency standards for new buildings under the Green Mark scheme. This will take effect by Dec 2010.

However, we recognize that our main challenge for the building sector is to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings.

For this, BCA launched a \$100mil incentive scheme for existing buildings in 2009 and I understand that the BCA is reviewing further measures to improve the energy efficiency of the existing building stock.

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International Collaborations - WorldGBC Congress 2010

6. The challenges on climate change are multi-faceted and the solutions are rapidly evolving.

It is therefore important that all countries, cities and organizations continue to share their expertise to enhance the environmental sustainability of our buildings.

7. The World Green Building Council is a union of the national Green Building Councils from around the world.

The International Congress is a key annual forum for the representatives from the various Green Building Councils around the world to come together to discuss strategies and policies to promote environmental sustainability in the built environment.

I would like to congratulate the Singapore Green Building Council for hosting this year's International Congress in Singapore. This is the first time the event is held in South East Asia.

8. International collaborations and greater partnership between the government and industry are key to furthering the green building agenda worldwide.

I am pleased to share that the Building and Construction Authority or BCA has been elected to sit on the United Nations Environment Program (U-N-E-P) Sustainable Buildings and Climate (SBCI) Board of Directors as well as the Sustainable Buildings Index Steering Committee.

As part of this partnership, BCA has had the privilege to host the UNEP meetings and work with UNEP-SBCI on a regional status report for South-East Asia.

BCA will also be co-hosting a workshop involving officials from countries in South East Asia to discuss policies and trends in sustainable buildings as part of this Singapore Green Building Week.

9. In addition to the International Congress, the Singapore Green Building Council is also holding its inaugural Green Building Conference, under the theme of "Sustainable and Affordable Solutions for the Built Environment".

Experts from around the world will share their knowledge on the latest trends in green building policies and technologies.

Concurrently, the Building Eco Xpo Asia, or BEX Asia in short, a trade event for the green building industry will also be held during the Singapore Green Building week.

With such a gathering of expert speakers and the showcase of innovative green products, participants would find unique takeaways that would benefit their company and their city in their efforts to green their buildings.

Capability Building

10. With the rise of the green building movement, there will be demand for green building professionals to support the greening of the built environment.

In Singapore, we would need to train about 18,000 to 20,000 green collar professionals over the next 10 years in the development, design, construction, operation and maintenance of green buildings.

This will include the upgrading of existing personnel and bringing in of new entrants into this high growth area.

11. To recognise the contributions of our green building professionals and individuals who have been leading the green building movement, I am pleased to announce that the BCA and Singapore Green Building Council will be launching a joint Green Individual Awards later this year.

The new Awards, which will be open for nomination in October this year, aim to celebrate their contributions and achievements in the development of a green and sustainable built environment.

12. I applaud this joint collaborative effort between BCA and the Singapore Green Building Council to motivate our committed green professionals to constantly challenge their limits and continue to be innovative.

Conclusion

13. Our pursuit for environmental sustainability in the built environment is all the more relevant to us at this time, as countries all over the world grapple with the effects of climate change.

The impact of climate change transcends national boundaries, and thus we would need to enhance collaboration among countries to address this challenge collectively. This conference is a step towards international cooperation by bringing together like-minded green leaders from all over the world to shape a sustainable built environment.

14. With this, I declare this year's Singapore Green Building Week open, together with the World Green Building Council International Congress, SGBC Green Building Conference and the BEX Asia.

Thank you.

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