

**EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**  
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**SPEECH BY RADM (NS) LUI TUCK YEW, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE,  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND MINISTRY OF INFORMATION,  
COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS, AT THE ITE GRADUATION CEREMONY  
2008 ON TUESDAY, 29 JULY 2008, AT 1530 HOURS, UNIVERSITY  
CULTURAL CENTRE**

Mr Bob Tan, Chairman, ITE Board of Governors

Mr Bruce Poh, Director & CEO of ITE

Distinguished Guests

Graduands of ITE

Parents and family members

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Good afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to be here this afternoon to share your joy in this special occasion. Today's Ceremony marks an important milestone for you, our graduating students, and I congratulate you on your achievement. The education you have received at ITE will prepare you well for the future that is ahead of you.

**Good Prospects for ITE Graduates**

2. ITE has come a long way to provide its graduates with quality education and relevant skills. You can see this from the outcomes achieved by its graduates. ITE graduates have done well in the job market and continue to be in high demand. According to the 2007 Graduate Employment Survey, 93% of ITE graduates found employment within 6 months of graduation. This is an improvement over last year by 4 percentage points. ITE graduates also command a good average monthly starting salary of \$1,400. A 2005 survey conducted by ITE on the employment and upgrading efforts of ITE graduates indicated that the average graduate who started work in 1995 doubled his or her salary within 10 years.

3. Employers also have many good things to say about ITE graduates. I understand that in the 2007 Employers' Assessment of ITE Graduates, 97% of employers agree that ITE graduates possess the Technical competencies needed in their field of work. Over 90% of employers also agree that ITE graduates have good methodological and social skills. The good employment prospects and job performance of ITE graduates reflect the strength and value of their education at ITE.

### **A Global Edge Through ITE Education**

#### ***Global Education***

4. Besides providing a high quality education to its students, ITE has been responsive to the needs and growth opportunities in the industry. Last year alone, eight new courses were introduced in response to the dynamic and rapid changes in the economy, and the diverse needs of industry. These included courses in new areas, such as Aerospace Avionics, Marine and Offshore Engineering, Pastry and Baking, and Hair Fashion and Design. These new courses were very well received by the secondary school leavers.

5. Next year, ITE will be launching a new School of Design and Media, offering another six new courses, including Interactive Media, Visual Communication and Architecture and Space Design. To be housed in ITE College Central, the new School will focus on programmes that will develop creative talents for Singapore's design and media sectors. This is an exciting development for school leavers who are keen on a career in the creative industries.

6. In 2005, ITE opened its first new campus – ITE College East at Simei. ITE's second comprehensive College -- the ITE College West -- is scheduled for completion in 2010. And the third mega campus – ITE College Central, is targeted to commence operations in 2012. These are significant investments that will provide first class facilities and a vibrant environment for students attending the ITE.

7. ITE students also enjoy rich opportunities for international exposure through ITE's robust Global Education Programme. Last year, 15% of ITE students participated in global education in 17 different countries, including Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Vietnam and USA. By 2010, we expect 25% of ITE students will have an opportunity to do so as part of their holistic education in ITE.

8. ITE is also part of the Global Education Network (or GEN), a collaboration of premier post-secondary education institutions which aims to provide students with an international learning experience for employment in a global economy. Since 2006, ITE has sent 22 students and six staff members on exchanges to the GEN partner institutions, and hosted another 28 students and six staff members from those institutions. These learning exchanges have been in the areas like Aerospace Technology, Digital Media and International Business.

9. I am pleased to note that ITE's GEN partners – Box Hill Institute of Australia, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology from Canada, and Kirkwood Community College of USA – are in the audience today. These institutions have hosted ITE students on their Overseas Student Exchange Programmes, some of whom are graduating today at the top of their cohort. One of these students is Ms Shahila Binte Syed Ali Shah, who is graduating today with a *Higher Nitec* in Information Technology.

10. Shahila, who has achieved a perfect GPA of 4.0, was one of three ITE Global Education Programme (GEP) Ambassadors to represent ITE College Central in the recent GEP Seminar. She participated in an Overseas Student Exchange Programme to Box Hill Institute in 2007. During her three-week attachment at Box Hill in Melbourne, Australia, she underwent a training programme on Voice-Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) technology and visited various networking companies in the industry. Upon returning to Singapore, she applied her new-found knowledge while on an industrial attachment at Malifax Technology Pte Ltd, a company that was handling Singtel's *mio* project. There, her superiors were impressed to see that an ITE graduate was able to do configurations using advanced VOIP technology. She was a wonderful ambassador to how an ITE-

type education can transform a student. I wish to congratulate Shahila on her achievements.

### ***Global Partnerships***

11. ITE students continue to do well in the workplace, as they learn in authentic environments developed through strategic alliances with industry and global institutional partners. In the last two years, ITE has signed Memoranda of Understanding with international industry leaders like NORDAM Singapore - a world leader in aerospace technology, Volkswagen Group Singapore, L'Oreal Singapore, and Hewlett-Packard, IBM. ITE has also developed partnerships with renowned training institutions like the Institut Paul Bocuse of France in the fields of culinary and hospitality services, and as well as the International Hotel Management Institute of Switzerland. These partnerships will provide even more opportunities for ITE students in the years to come.

### ***Global Recognition***

12. ITE has also gained global recognition among its peers and industry players. Many international visitors to ITE's Vocational and Technical Education or VTE tell us that it is a unique strength of the Singapore education system. Without fail, they leave with a deep impression of the strengths and quality of technical education in Singapore.

13. Internationally, Singapore's expertise in VTE is much sought after by our friends in different parts of the world. ITE is the technical consultant of the Jordanian Regional Vocational Training Centre at Amman. Through the World Bank, ITE has also conducted workshops on VTE for policy makers, leaders and officials from China and African countries over the last 2 years. Our strengths in VTE are a competitive edge for the Singapore economy.

14. Last year, ITE was announced the Global Winner of the IBM Innovations Award in Transforming Government for its "Trail-blazing Transformation of Vocational and Technical Education in Singapore". Conferred by Harvard University's Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, the Award recognised ITE's transformation of VTE in Singapore as a "model programme" in

improving vocational and technical education. Selected from among 100 other government programmes submitted by 30 countries, including Canada, Georgia and USA, the Award is an affirmation of the quality and international standing of the vocational and technical education in Singapore.

15. Over the years, ITE has progressed and grown from strength to strength, and I commend ITE on its pursuit of excellence. I am confident that the success of ITE and its graduates and, together with a dedicated team of ITE staff, will pave the way for future achievements. During the past decade, ITE has transformed itself, and today, ITE stands for 'It's Truly Excellent'.

### **Graduates Who Live their Dreams**

16. ITE offers many varied pathways for its students to explore their interests and abilities, and to stretch their potential, not only here in Singapore, but also on the world stage. In February this year, the ITE team edged out veteran teams from USA, Japan and South Korea to emerge Champion in the Open Category of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Applied Power Electronics Conference Micromouse Competition in Texas, USA. ITE's winning mouse, named "Excel-5", registered a record time of 10.4 seconds, surpassing even strong contenders from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The brains behind the win, is none other than Khiew Tzong Yong, an ITE graduate who returned to work in ITE as a member of the staff. Not only are his skills of international standards, he has also coached a number of students, including, R Sathiyasilan, a *Higher Nitec* in Electronics Engineering student, who also received the Best Student Award at the same international competition.

17. Timothy Jung Ming, one of the top graduates this year, is another ITE graduate who is living his dreams because of the opportunities he had in ITE. Timothy was talent-spotted by Chef Jason Tan of the **Julien Bompard** restaurant, and was subsequently made Chef Tan's assistant at the Singapore Bocuse d'Or Culinary Selections held at ITE. The master-and-student team emerged as the winner at the Selections and went on to represent Singapore in the Bocuse d'Or Asia Competition in Shanghai, China in May this year, where they did Singapore proud by clinching the Bronze Trophy.

18. In January 2009, Chef Jason Tan and Timothy will be representing Singapore to compete among 24 other international teams at the Bocuse d'Or World Championship, to be held in Lyon, France. We wish them all the very best.

### **Conclusion**

19. What does all this mean for you, ITE graduands? It means that you have received a quality and relevant education in ITE, delivered by its team of dedicated lecturers. It means that all of you have every reason to be proud of your achievements, overcoming many obstacles and setbacks along the way. It means that you can be confident that you have the technical knowledge and skills that will be attractive to your future employers. But I also hope it means that you will continue to strive hard, to persevere, to find ways to improve yourself and to contribute back to society. It is my hope that you have taken away more than just knowledge from your time at ITE, and you will leave the institution with confidence, zest and a passion for life and work.

20. My heartiest congratulations once again to all graduands. I wish you success in your future endeavours. Thank you.