

**ADDRESS BY MR CHANG CHIN NAM, DIRECTOR PRECISION ENGINEERING,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD, AT THE TECHNICAL ENGINEER  
DIPLOMA PROJECT FAIR ON 8 MARCH 2010 AT 1100 HOURS AT ITE  
COLLEGE WEST (BALESTIER CAMPUS)**

**Mr Heng Guan Teck**  
Deputy CEO (Academic)/ITE

**Mr Aw York Bin**  
Deputy CEO (Industry)/ITE

**Dr Yek Tiew Ming**  
Principal/ITE College West

**Mr Tan Seng Hua**  
Principal/ITE College Central

**Mr Jan-Georg Schröder**  
Student Director and Head of Department/ Gottlieb-Daimler-Schule 1

Distinguished Guests from the Federal Republic of Germany

Industry Delegates

ITE staff and students

Ladies and Gentlemen

### **Introduction**

1 Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to be here to witness the inaugural Technical Engineer Diploma Project Fair 2010. I congratulate the pioneering batch of graduates from the Technical Engineer Diploma (or TED) in Machine Technology on your achievements, and you have every reason to be proud.

## **Precision Engineering – A Positive Outlook**

2 Manufacturing is one of the key engines of growth for the Singapore economy. The Government's long-term goal is to maintain the contribution of manufacturing to GDP between 20-25%. In view of the severe global economic downturn, it contributed 18% of the GDP in 2009<sup>1</sup>.

3 Precision Engineering forms the backbone of manufacturing. It is a key enabler for manufacturing industries such as aerospace, electronics, marine, medical technology and oil & gas equipment. Last year, the Precision Engineering sector contributed more than S\$19b in manufacturing output and S\$5.6b in value-added. It employs around 91,000 people, which forms about a quarter of our manufacturing workforce.

4 As the global economy recovers, we see a return of positive business sentiment in manufacturing for the first half of 2010. Output from the Precision Engineering sector expanded 14.7% year-on-year in December 2009, with the precision modules & components segment growing 22.4% in December and the machinery and systems segment growing 8.1%<sup>2</sup>. Employment forecast also shows that precision engineering companies are expecting to increase their employment in the first quarter of 2010<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Singapore Department of Statistics

<sup>2</sup> Monthly Manufacturing Performance December 2009, January 26, 2010, EDB

<sup>3</sup> Survey of Business expectations of the manufacturing sector Singapore 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2010

5 The shift of manufacturing to Asia accelerated in recent years with the rise of Asian economies and growing markets. Singapore, with a well educated workforce and an attractive business environment, stands to capture the benefits and opportunities by being in Asia. However, we also face strong competition for foreign investors in Asia, and therefore, need to further differentiate ourselves and offer unique value propositions to remain relevant in this competitive manufacturing landscape.

6 One of the challenges we face today is the development of Precision Engineering talent to meet the growing complexity of manufacturing. To address this, EDB has been working together with government agencies such as SPRING Singapore, Workforce Development Agency and education institutions, such as ITE, to develop manpower to meet future needs of the industries.

### **Developing PE Workforce for the future**

7 In 2007, Minister Lim Swee Say launched the S\$76 million Precision Engineering Manpower Initiative to upgrade and rejuvenate the workforce. To support this initiative, the National Precision Engineering Scholarship (NPES) and National Precision Engineering Specialist programme were introduced. The Technical Engineer Diploma in ITE is one of the courses supported under this programme. Of the 43 graduates from the pioneer batch of students, 36 are scholarship recipients and I hope that more students will be able to benefit from this scholarship. I am very pleased that the first batch of graduates is now ready to join the pool of Precision Engineering talent and I look forward to each of you contributing to the industry.

8 ITE's Technical Engineer Diploma in Machine Technology programme is closely modelled after the State of Baden-Württemberg's state-certified Technical Engineer Programme. It is the first of such programmes offered outside Germany and is a result of a successful partnership between ITE, the German Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Baden Württemberg, and the Gottlieb-Daimler-Schule in Stuttgart. This programme is designed to fill the critical need for highly-skilled technologists in the Precision Engineering industry. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners from Germany for their contribution to the success of this programme.

9 The success of this programme cannot be achieved without the strong support of the industry. It has received strong endorsement with companies such as ASM Technology Pte Ltd, II-VI Singapore Pte Ltd and Unisteel Technology Ltd offering scholarships to students. I am confident that the graduating students can look forward to good job offers from companies as they seek to secure your skills and expertise.

### **Conclusion**

10 The Singapore economy has turned around and there are going to be good job opportunities in the manufacturing sector. ITE has provided each of you, the graduates, a good foundation of critical technical knowledge and skills to pursue your career aspirations and life goals. I hope you will continue to strengthen your foundation formed in ITE as you take on new challenges in industry.

Congratulations on completing the course and I wish you all the best for your future.

Thank you.