

OPENING REMARKS BY MR BRUCE POH, DIRECTOR & CEO, ITE, AND SINGAPORE'S OFFICIAL DELEGATE TO WORLDSKILLS INTERNATIONAL, AT THE SENDING-OFF CEREMONY FOR TEAM SINGAPORE AT WORLDSKILLS COMPETITION 2015, HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 JULY 2015, 11.30 AM AT EXECUTIVE SALON 1, ITE HEADQUARTERS

Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister For Education

WDA Chief Executive

Polytechnic Principals

Friends from WDA and Industry, and Colleagues from the Polytechnics and ITE

Team Singapore Competitors

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

- 1 Good morning. On behalf of the WorldSkills Singapore Council, I would like to welcome you to the Sending-off Ceremony for Team Singapore at the 43rd WorldSkills Competition, to be held in Sao Paulo, Brazil. We are very happy that Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education, has joined us this morning for the ceremony. Thank you, Minister.

- 2 With 13 days to the competition, I am sure our competitors are very excited. They are not the only ones, I am sure. We are all eager to go to Brazil and see them do their best.

Team Singapore – Our Top Skilled Youths

- 3 The biennial WorldSkills Competition celebrates the best among youths talented in skills, from around the world. It is a platform like the Youth Olympics, but where the challenges are not in sports, but in vocational and technical skills. Victory in these competitions also comes with the ‘World Champion’ tag.
- 4 Over the years, Singapore has produced many World Champions in skills. We started participating in WorldSkills Competitions in 1995. Since then, **23** Singaporean competitors have won **Gold Medals**, and become World Champions. Of these, two – **Viridis Liew** in 2005 and **Tan Thiam Shui** in 2009 – also won the Albert Vidal Award. This award is given to the highest scoring competitor for the entire competition.
- 5 Our competitors have also won **seven Silver and eight Bronze Medals**, and **49 Medallions for Excellence** over

the years. The overall strong performance of our competitors at the WorldSkills Competitions underlines the government's strong emphasis and attention on Vocational and Technical Education here in Singapore.

- 6 As you know, under the *SkillsFuture* Movement, we want to provide Singaporeans with the opportunities to develop their fullest potential throughout life and to drive Singapore's next phase of development towards an advanced economy and inclusive society. Hence, the WorldSkills Competition is a good opportunity to benchmark our skills against world standards, and a significant platform to develop competitive skills for our future.

A New Team

- 7 This year, a new team takes on the challenge of carrying Singapore's flag high at the Competition. Comprising our best skilled youths from ITE and the Polytechnics, the contingent of **22** young men and women will participate in **20** skill areas.
- 8 We have seen our competitors deeply focused in their training, and witnessed their dedication and persistence in reaching the highest standards. It gives me great

confidence that they will be able to handle the heat of the challenge and give Singapore their best.

- 9 To the members of Team Singapore – this year, you will face competition from more than **1,200** competitors, from over **60** countries. But I know all of you will be pushing yourselves to give Singapore a special Jubilee gift through your performance.

- 10 This Competition is not just about whether you win a Medal or not. Through the Competition, I hope you will discover new things about yourself, your skills, and the world. I hope your participation will not only develop your skills, but develop you holistically as a young person. You have all trained hard. As you fly off soon to Brazil, bring with you confidence and conviction. Do your best and enjoy the experience.

Conclusion

- 11 At this juncture, I would like to especially thank the Singapore Workforce Development Agency, or WDA, for sponsoring Team Singapore at the Competition and for the very attractive prizes our winners will receive.

- 12 I would also like to take this opportunity to also thank all experts, coaches, supporters and partners, from industry and education institutions, for your steadfast commitment to developing our youth.

- 13 Team Singapore, as we hand over the Singapore Flag to you, we also hand to you our hopes and best wishes. Go and roar for Singapore at WorldSkills Sao Paulo!

Thank you.