

WELCOME REMARKS BY MS LOW KHAH GEK, CEO/ITE, AT THE SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONFERENCE 2018, ON WED 3 OCT 2018, AT 10AM, AT THE RAFFLES CITY CONVENTION CENTRE, SINGAPORE

Mr Ong Ye Kung

Minister for Education

Mr Volker Schebesta

Deputy Minister for Education & State Secretary
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports,
Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Mr Andreas Schleicher

Director for Education and Skills, and Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Secretary-General at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Mr Lai Chung Han

Second Permanent Secretary (Education)

Mr Bob Tan

Chairman, ITE Board of Governors

Mr Heng Chiang Gnee

Chairman, Board of Directors ITE Education Services

Excellencies

Eminent Speakers, Panel Facilitators

Guests and Delegates from Overseas and Singapore

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

- 1 Good morning and welcome to the Singapore International TVET Conference 2018. I would like to first thank Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Education, for joining us this morning.

- 2 I am very pleased to welcome our 15 distinguished speakers. We look forward to your rich and stimulating sharing at this conference.
- 3 I am happy to share that we have a full-house for this Conference. 400 delegates representing 21 countries are present in this room. To our overseas speakers and delegates, a special welcome to the Conference as well as to Singapore. I hope you are already enjoying Singapore's warm hospitality and invigorating character. *[Beware, it may not be the heat that is energy-sapping but it is the hectic programme and abundance of activities during your few days here that would leave you exhausted! We, the locals, are used to this frantic pace and relentless stimulation.]*

The Increasing Importance of TVET

- 4 All of us have chosen to be at this Conference because we recognise that TVET is critical to the economic and social development of our respective countries. TVET prepares youths for meaningful careers and plays ensures the employability resilience of adult workers through skills upgrading and re-skilling.
- 5 We all know that there has been, and, in many countries, continues to be a general bias for academic education. But this is changing. More countries are recognising that investing in a good TVET system can strongly impact their economic growth. Countries are reforming their TVET systems and many are looking around the world for best practices and good systems. There is hunger to learn.
- 6 One clear indicator of this hunger is the number of TVET conferences being organised around the world. I did a quick google search and already found that this year alone, we have 15 TVET Conferences –

held in Germany, Australia, Switzerland, Brazil, South Africa, USA, Austria, Netherlands, UK, Vietnam, Malaysia, China. [*There could be more.*] With this Singapore's TVET Conference, we have just added one more to the list.

- 7 The objectives for ITE to organise this Conference are two-fold: i) to reflect on and share Singapore's experience in TVET and ii) to hear from distinguished speakers on the developments in TVET around the world.
- 8 Our experience in ITE over the years have shown that a good TVET system is not built overnight. ITE went through many rounds of transformation in the last 25 years. These phases of transformation mirrored the changes in our national economy, our industries, manpower needs and aspirations of the citizens. There are many stakeholders and considerations. The TVET system and reforms must match each country's economic, industry and future development.
- 9 Hence at this conference, we ensure the diverse views and perspectives are heard not just from TVET policy makers but also from industry practitioners and TVET practitioners.

Industry Transformation: Imperatives for Future Skills and Learning

- 10 One of the biggest challenges TVET institutions face is keeping ourselves relevant to industry. Industry requirements shape our TVET offerings. But industry, is not making it easy for us! The rate of change as industry adopts newer technologies is mind-boggling.
- 11 Just as we have adopted Augmented and Virtual Realities and Drones into our training programmes, we now have to include the new 'ABCs':

A for 'Analytics and Artificial Intelligence', B for 'Big Data and Blockchain', and C for 'Cloud and Cybersecurity'. Industry moves rapidly in adopting new technologies, transforming work processes, and thus changing the job roles and skill sets. We cannot observe from a distance because our graduates have to move into new job roles in industry and start performing immediately.

- 12 The design of TVET must start from an understanding of what industry is doing and where it is moving. For this Conference, we have put 'Industry Transformation' squarely as the trigger for all our sharing and discussion. The theme of this year's Conference, **Industry Transformation: Imperatives for Future Skills and Learning**, focuses on the evolving role of TVET in preparing our workforce for the changing future economy. The two sub-themes will focus broadly on: i) what is happening out there in terms of the future of work and skills, and ii) how TVET institutions can respond.

- 13 We have an impressive slate of renowned speakers from around the world as well as local policy makers and leaders to offer their unique sets of expertise, experience and insights.
 - a. Sharing from Expert Strategists and Analyst points on view:
 - **Minister Ong**, as our Guest-of-Honour
 - **Deputy Minister Schebesta**
 - **Mr Andreas Schleicher**, from OECD
 - **Mr Carl Frey**, from University of Oxford, UK

 - b. From Industry Experts:
 - **Mr Enrico Rühle**, Festo Didactic SE, Germany
 - **Mr Ong Kim Pong**, PSA International, Singapore

- **Ms Janet Ang**, IBM Innovation Services, Singapore
- c. From Policy Makers:
- **Mr Lam Yi Young**, Ministry of Trade and Industry Singapore
 - **Mr Ng Cher Pong**, Ministry of Education, Singapore
 - **Mr Gilbert Tan**, Employment & Employability Institute, Singapore
- d. And from the TVET institutions:
- **Mrs Carrie Yau**, Hong Kong Vocational Training Council
 - **Mr David Ross**, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Canada
 - **Ms Mary Faraone**, Holmesglen Institute, Australia
 - **Mr Tan Seng Hua**, ITE, Singapore
 - **Mr Lim Peng Hun**, Singapore Polytechnic
 - **Mr Patrice Choong**, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Singapore

Concluding Remarks

14 We can really look forward to an exciting and stimulating Conference. I wish everyone a fulfilling and rewarding two days ahead. To our foreign delegates, enjoy your stay in Singapore!

Thank you.