

**SPEECH BY MR NG CHER PONG, CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
SINGAPORE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
AT SMU-CPS'S GRADUATION CEREMONY ON 30 OCTOBER 2015,
2PM, MOCHTAR RIADY AUDITORIUM, SMU, LEVEL 5,
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Professor Annie Koh, Vice President, Office of Business Development
and Academic Director, Centre for Professional Studies

Graduands

Ladies and gentlemen

Introduction

1. Good Afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to be here today at SMU's Human Resource (HR) and Leadership & People Management (LPM) Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) Graduation Ceremony and Leadership Forum. I am honoured to share this proud moment with you and your families. I would like to commend you on your dedication towards your learning and work. It is never easy to balance education and work commitments, but all of you have done so very well. My heartiest congratulations to you on successfully completing the HR Graduate Certification

Programme and Executive Certificate in Leadership & People Management, thereby attaining your Human Resource (HR) Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) and Leadership & People Management (LPM) Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) certification respectively. These are industry-recognised qualifications and I am told that many of you have already achieved notable success with your newly-acquired skills. I would like to highlight the achievements of two notable graduates: Mr Kenneth Lim and Ms Anne Tan.

- Mr Kenneth Lim, currently an Assistant HR Manager at Daimler South East Asia (a Mercedes-Benz company), has continuously strived to pursue deeper knowledge in the field of human resource. The HR Graduate Certification Programme enabled him to delve into a wide range of HR related issues, and to foster closer networks with HR professionals. The programme has also facilitated in-depth discussions among HR practitioners from diverse backgrounds. After completing the programme, he developed a strong interest to specialise his learning in HR, and he took the next step to enrol into the Masters in

Human Resource Management and Development from New York University, School of Professional Studies.

- Ms Anne Tan currently holds the People Development and Resourcing Manager position for South Asia, East Asia & Oceania in Tetra Pak South East Asia. She was in the IT profession for the past 16 years. As she had a keen interest and was inclined to make a career switch into HR, she enrolled for the HR Graduate Certification Programme in an effort to have a better understanding of HR topics. When the opportunity came, armed with the qualifications, and the right attitude towards learning, she clinched the role as a People Development and Resourcing Manager for the region in her company.
2. To all the graduates, your learning journey has just begun. It is important that you continue to develop and upgrade yourself throughout your lives. And with SkillsFuture, we are opening up many more opportunities for you to empower you to do so.

SkillsFuture Initiatives for Budget 2015: Developing our People

3. In the 2015 Budget Statement, Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, outlined the Government's efforts to help Singaporeans learn throughout their lives through SkillsFuture. This is a national movement that seeks to provide opportunities for every citizen to develop to their fullest potential throughout life, regardless of their starting points. It aims to promote skills mastery in every job, and foster a culture of lifelong learning for all Singaporeans. It is about moving beyond qualifications and towards developing deep and relevant skills. Everyone in different stages of life can benefit from it – students, working adults in early careers to mid and late careers, employers and training partners. There is truly something for everyone.

4. There are two SkillsFuture initiatives that may be of particular relevance to the graduands in supporting you in your lifelong learning journey:

- i) ***SkillsFuture Mid-Career Enhanced Subsidy***

With effect from 1 October 2015, all Singaporeans aged 40 and above receive up to 90% course fee subsidy for WDA-funded courses. This is an additional 20 to 40 per cent

increase in subsidy for WDA-funded courses. More than 8,000 courses are eligible for the enhanced subsidies.

ii) SkillsFuture Credit

Every Singapore citizen aged 25 years and above will receive an opening credit of \$500 to support his or her learning needs. The credit can be used for work-skills related courses supported by public agencies, including the full range of WSQ and non-WSQ courses funded by WDA, courses at our post-secondary educational institutions, and courses funded by other public agencies. Periodic top-ups to the SkillsFuture Credit account will also be made. This will be rolled out in the first quarter of 2016.

5. I urge you to aspire towards skills mastery and make full use of the various SkillsFuture initiatives.
6. HR and LPM will play an increasingly important role in ensuring that the business has the right skills and talents, and has the capability to grow and retain its skills and talents. And to do so effectively, HR professionals and People Managers too will need to

embrace lifelong learning to acquire professional recognition and enhance their skills to be future-ready. They are therefore key to the SkillsFuture movement, to achieving Singapore's vision to build an advanced economy and inclusive society. Once again my congratulations to all graduates on your achievements! I wish you all the best!

7. Thank you and have a good weekend.
