

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR ROBERT CHUA, DIRECTOR,
TECHNICAL COOPERATION DIRECTORATE, MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
SINGAPORE-ADB TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME
STUDY VISIT FORUM ON E-GOVERNMENT AND TRADE
FACILITATION FOR CENTRAL ASIA REPUBLICS ON 24 JAN 2006
AT 9.15 AM AT MFA PRESS ROOM**

Ms A. Noy Siackhachanh, Director, Governance, Finance, and Trade Division, East and Central Asia Department, Asian Development Bank

Mr Andrew Khaw, Director, Corporate Group, International Enterprise Singapore

Colleagues from Info-Comm Development Authority, International Trade Institute of Singapore and National Computer Systems

Distinguished Guests

Good morning.

Welcome to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the opening ceremony of the STUDY VISIT FORUM ON E-GOVERNMENT AND TRADE FACILITATION FOR CENTRAL ASIA REPUBLICS. This programme is held under the auspices of the Singapore-ADB Technical Cooperation Programme.

Singapore-Commonwealth Third Country Training Programme

2 Owing to our firm belief in human capital development, Singapore has been supporting training programmes through the Singapore-ADB Technical Co-operation Programme. Established in 1991, the programme entails conducting joint regional training courses for developing countries. To date, 20 joint training courses had been conducted for over 450 participants in the areas of tourism, road safety management, port/airport management, water and solid waste management and technology transfer.

Singapore Cooperation Programme

3 When Singapore was received into the United Nations in September 1965 following our independence that same year, we assured the General Assembly our country would work with other nations in realising the aims and objects of the UN Charter. One of which is the promotion of economic development through mutual aid. Though we are a small country not endowed with ample natural resources and though we are still aspiring to be among the highly advanced nations of the world, we are nevertheless a highly urbanised community that has acquired experience and knowledge which we are prepared to share with others in the various cooperation schemes. Undoubtedly these offers of assistance can be carried out only on a modest scale but if we obtain help from others we must be ready to help others as much in return.

4 Since then, many countries and international organisations offered us generous assistance and advice. Without a hinterland and with only two million people then, we organised ourselves in a practical way, by making the world our hinterland. Our survival has very much dependent on external factors. Having now attained a reasonable standard of economic development, we wish to in turn share our development experiences with other countries within our limited resources.

5 Although Singapore has been sharing its developmental experience with other developing countries since the 1960s, it was not until 1992 when the Singapore Cooperation Programme (or SCP) was formally established under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Bringing together the various technical cooperation programmes of various Organs of State, the SCP has sponsored courses and study visits for over 40,000 officials from more than 160 developing countries.

Objectives of Course

6 Besides the substantive part of the programme, we have also arranged some social events to let you experience Singapore's multi-cultural environment and cuisines. If your schedule permits, you may wish to also explore the many interesting restaurants, museums and ongoing cultural events on your own. [IES will mention the substantive part of the programme]

SCP Alumni Network

7 I am pleased to inform you that my Ministry has recently

established a Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) Alumni Network. The SCP alumni network can serve as a contact forum for our former SCP participants. We will keep in touch with our alumni through our quarterly "Experience Singapore" newsletter. In addition, alumni members can also access the "SCP Alumni Website" to interact among themselves and to post messages online on the bulletin board. All former SCP participants are invited to register as members.

Conclusion

8 In conclusion, I express our deep appreciation to our partner, the Asian Development Bank, and to our colleagues from IES, ITIS, IDA and NCS for their contribution to this programme. And to our distinguished participants, I wish you an enjoyable and memorable stay in Singapore.

9 Thank you.

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