

**OPENING ADDRESS BY DR JOHN KEUNG, CEO, BCA AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> INTAKE OF THE SMU-BCA-WDA PRODUCTIVITY & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ON 27 AUG 2012 AT THE SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY**

Mr Lee Chuan Seng  
Deputy Chairman, Building and Construction Authority

Associate Professor Annie Koh  
Vice President (Business Development and External Relations), Singapore Management University

Distinguished Panelists

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good afternoon to all of you.

1. First, let me congratulate all the 21 graduates who have successfully completed the SMU-BCA-WDA Productivity and Leadership Development Programme. This is the fourth intake and is a good indication that companies in the built environment industry are recognising the need to continually nurture their senior management staff.
2. This is important as the construction sector continues to experience positive growth and this is likely to be sustained over the next few years.

**Challenges to Drive Construction Productivity**

3. Since the beginning of this year, the government has implemented a series of new measures to drive productivity growth in a tightening labour market. While we understand that companies in our industry are finding it increasingly difficult and costly to recruit skilled manpower, it is a necessary step we have to go through for the longer term sustainability of our industry, especially if we set our sight to venture overseas.
4. It is thus important for leaders in our industry to realise not just the short term challenges, but also the longer term prospects for our industry, given the ever-changing business environment and rising competition locally and internationally.
5. To sharpen our competitive edge, the way forward has to be our quest for innovation and capability building and drive for significant productivity improvement in our industry. It is therefore critical for our companies to commit the necessary resources to build technology capabilities and invest in skills training and development of its human capital to support their productivity and innovation initiatives.

### **Incentives to Drive Construction Productivity**

6. To help the construction industry improve productivity and strengthen its capability, BCA has, under the S\$250-million Construction Productivity and Capability Fund (CPCF), extended funding support to training at the PMET level for areas which have a high impact on productivity, such as Building Information Modelling (BIM), project management, and precast design and construction. I would like to encourage more companies to tap on the CPCF to upgrade the capabilities of your PMET personnel.

### **Continuous Improvement in SMU-BCA-WDA Programme**

7. By the same token, we are also continually reviewing the curriculum of the SMU-BCA-WDA Productivity and Leadership Development Programme to ensure that it remains relevant to the challenges and opportunities facing our construction industry.

8. For the next intake, I am pleased to announce that the new curriculum will include topics on driving changes in productivity and internationalisation strategies.

I understand that guest speakers and industry panel experts will share their approaches and experiences in driving productivity and quality from the perspectives of developers, contractors and consultants. There will also be focus areas on best practices and case studies on internationalisation strategies tailored specifically for the construction industry for its next intake starting March 2013. I hope this will provide an impetus for more companies to consider sending their staff to this programme.

### **Graduates Feedback on SMU-BCA-WDA Programme**

9. Indeed, I think the SMU-BCA-WDA Productivity and Leadership Development Programme, which is an Advanced Management Programme, is vital to leadership development in our industry and in the individual companies. Many of our past graduates have found the course to be insightful and highly applicable to real challenges and situations faced by growing organisations in the construction sector.

10. A graduate commented that he has benefitted from “the sharing of knowledge and case studies from various industry professionals who had provided real and useful learning points”. Another graduate shared that the programme has given him a broader vision on how to make decisions from a senior management perspective and help to set up a stronger foundation in productivity and leadership. All these are testaments to the success of this programme.

### **Strong Partnerships in the SMU-BCA-WDA Programmes**

11. Last but not least, I would like to thank SMU, participating companies and individuals for sharing their knowledge and time in making this programme possible. In particular, I would like to say a special thank you to Professor Annie Koh for her strong and enthusiastic support for this programme.

12. We also like to thank the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) for subsidising 50% of the course fee since the beginning of this programme. As the amount of funding is limited, we hope that companies will seize this opportunity to send their senior management for the next intake of the programme which will commence from March 2013.

### **Conclusion**

13. Finally, I wish all graduates success in your learning journey to sharpen and enhance your organisational competitiveness in the years to come.

Thank you.