

WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR QUEK SEE TIAT, CHAIRMAN, BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY, AT THE BCA-INDUSTRY BUILT ENVIRONMENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARD CEREMONY ON 3 AUGUST 2012, 2.35PM AT FAIRMONT SINGAPORE (RAFFLES CITY) HOTEL

Mr Tan Chuan-Jin
Acting Minister for Manpower and Senior Minister of State for National Development

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

1 Welcome to the 2012 BCA-Industry Built Environment Scholarship Award Ceremony. Let me first congratulate this year's scholarship recipients.

2 Today marks an important milestone for the BCA-Industry Built Environment Scholarship Awards. We are giving out the inaugural diploma scholarships to 45 scholars. Together with the 61 undergraduates who will be receiving their scholarships, we are witnessing a record 106 scholarship awards to be given out today for the built environment professions.

3 This year, we achieved another record breaking feat, as we have a total of 38 industry sponsors partnering us to groom the next generation of young leaders for the built environment, up from 33 last year. I would like to specially thank the sponsors for their commitment and support in attracting more young talents to join the industry.

New Diploma Scholarship and Sponsorship Programmes

4 Just a little bit about the new diploma scholarships. These BCA-Industry Diploma Scholarships are awarded to students who are keen to take up built environment diploma courses at the local polytechnics and the BCA Academy. Our aim is to build up the technical and associate professional level of the workforce. The scholarship is structured in two stages to not only provide the scholars with financial assistance during their studies, but also an attractive salary and a clear progression path when they graduate. I am delighted to see 45 bright students awarded the diploma scholarship in the first year, and I hope more students will come forward to join the programme.

Full Suite of Manpower Development Programmes to Enhance the Quality of the Construction Workforce

5 The industry needs more young talents in order to groom the next generation of leaders to lead the transformation of the industry. Under the Construction Productivity Roadmap, BCA is working with the industry to build up a core group of skilled and experienced workforce at all levels. We have a full suite of manpower development programmes, namely the undergraduate and diploma scholarship and sponsorship, as well as the apprenticeship programmes. Firms can tap on these incentive programmes to develop their manpower, covering the professional level to the technical, supervisory, foremen and tradesmen levels. I would like to encourage more industry partners to join hands with BCA in these worthwhile initiatives to rejuvenate and energise the industry.

Exciting Time for the Built Environment Industry

6 To all our new scholars who are here today, this is an exciting time to join the industry. The industry is transforming fast, with many ongoing positive developments. There are abundant career opportunities, with a sustained construction demand supported by strong public housing and infrastructure projects.

7 The industry plays a key role in shaping our urban landscape and built environment. For example, we are championing the greening of our buildings to make them more environmentally friendly. We are also ensuring that our buildings adopt universal design to meet the needs of all users, especially our fast ageing population.

8 Our developers, architects, engineers, contractors and others in the industry have also looked beyond the domestic market and leveraged on the strong Singapore brand name and expertise in urban solutions, masterplanning and green buildings to seize the vast opportunities in the global market. The industry certainly can provide you with fulfilling careers given the abundant growth and advancement opportunities.

9 The working conditions are also improving. The industry's push for higher productivity through greater prefabrication and mechanisation will result in less manual labour, better and cleaner site conditions as well as improved safety standards.

10 One good example is the Tiong Seng Prefabrication Hub. It is Singapore's first automated precast facility, which not only improves productivity substantially, but also provides a more conducive working environment. With more traditional on-site construction activities moved off-site, workers can now work in a controlled factory environment, as compared to working on construction sites where they are subjected to elements of weather.

11 Another technology that we are pushing for under the Construction Productivity Roadmap is the Building Information Modelling (BIM). BIM is a key enabling tool which will transform the way that the different players along the value chain from the developers to architects, engineers and then to builders, operate and communicate with each other. I believe this new 3D-modeling tool will appeal to our younger and more tech-savvy generation.

12 With such new developments in the industry, it is an opportune time for all of you to take your first step to join the industry and be a part of this very exciting phase of transformation in the built environment professions. As built environment professionals, we are responsible to innovate, break new grounds, transform our industry and make our city and the region more inclusive and sustainable and a better place to live.

Career Promotion Initiatives – Job shadowing and Internship Programmes

13 Let me now turn to another career promotion initiative - the internship programmes. To ignite the passion of the younger ones in shaping the built environment, the best way is to allow them to experience it for themselves. Hence, next year, BCA will go out in a big way to partner the industry to expand the outreach of job exposure and internship opportunities to students.

14 On this, BCA piloted a job shadowing programme for graduating 'A' level students in February this year. Under the programme, the students went on a series of visits to different firms and built environment related government agencies to understand the diversified career options in our industry. This was followed by an opportunity to shadow a mentor in a firm of their interest. This programme has received very positive feedback from the students. Bo Jun, one of the students who participated in the pilot run, found the programme to be an excellent eye-opener. The hands-on experience and real life encounters gave him a deeper understanding of career opportunities available in the industry. I am glad to share that he is taking a step further in his career aspirations and is receiving the Undergraduate Scholarship awarded by CapitaLand. Congratulations, Bo Jun!

15 There will be more internship opportunities for students who want to find out more about careers in the industry. BCA will be working with the Universities and industry firms to spice up the internship experience and prepare the students to be job ready professionals.

Conclusion

16 We hope to inspire more of our young to embark on a rewarding and fulfilling career in the built environment. In conclusion, let me once again extend my congratulations to the graduating scholars, who will now become part of an exciting Industry, and welcome on board our new built environment scholars. Thank you.