

SPEECH BY DR JOHN KEUNG, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY, AT SHIMIZU SINGAPORE OFFICE 40TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER, 24 SEPTEMBER 2013 (TUESDAY), 7.00 PM AT THE GRAND COPTHORNE WATERFRONT HOTEL, LEVEL 4, GRAND BALLROOM

Mr Yoichi Miyamoto,
President, Shimizu Corporation

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening.

1 I am honoured to be here tonight. On behalf of the Building and Construction Authority, I wish Shimizu Singapore a happy 40th Anniversary and many more good years to come.

2 Shimizu Singapore has achieved much in 40 years. Its strong portfolio includes award winning projects like Fusionopolis, Mapletree Business City and Utown Residence, to name a few. In fact, Utown Residence attained the BCA Construction Excellence Award this year. Shimizu was also conferred the BCA Built Environment Leadership Gold Class Award last year.

3 While these achievements are significant, I believe Shimizu's potential as a leader in Singapore's built environment sector could be further strengthened. Let me explain.

Prefabrication Technology

4 The first is on prefabrication technology. We all know that prefabrication technology is very advanced and well established in Japan. It is also highly industrialised.

High quality prefabricated units such as houses and bathrooms are produced efficiently in Japan on a large scale basis, using the latest production technology and innovation. I would urge **Shimizu Singapore to seriously consider bringing more of such advanced prefabrication technology into Singapore, to play a leading role in the industry's productivity journey.**

5 I would also look forward to Shimizu to lead the proliferation of the use of prefabricated components here in Singapore, be they prefabricated bathroom units, window facades or other more complex precast components. Besides an improvement in productivity, this will also lead to a cleaner and quieter worksite, with better house-keeping and space management to minimise its impact on the surrounding areas.

6 I would thus urge **Shimizu Singapore to take on a more proactive role in convincing and sharing its expertise on better and more advanced building methods with the local industry.** For example, it could take the initiative to go upstream to convince developers to use more prefabricated components in their projects to improve construction productivity and buildability.

Research and Development

7 Besides bringing advanced prefabrication technology into Singapore, another area where Shimizu can contribute more is on Research and Development, focusing on

game-changing construction technologies in Singapore. Shimizu Corporation is well known for its strong capability in Research and Development or R&D. It has the support of the Shimizu Institute of Technology in Japan which has played an important role in modernising construction technology and bringing innovation into the industry since 1944. As such, **Shimizu Singapore can leverage on the strength of its parent R&D to help Singapore in its construction productivity journey.** Let me elaborate.

8 As you know, BCA has been keen for the local industry to explore the use of advanced prefabrication technologies, such as the Unitised Building system and Cross-Laminated Timber construction.

9 Unitised Buildings or UBs are prefabricated in a quality controlled factory. The completed units are transported to site and craned into position while work at the factory continues. This parallel track building programme reduces construction time, saves space in an otherwise cluttered building site, and is conducive for a safer work environment. UBs are durable, clean, sustainable and of high quality. They have been used in the construction of many medium and high-rise residential, hotel and hospital facilities in Australia.

10 In a similar vein, Cross-Laminated Timber or CLT construction, long established in Europe, has been gaining traction in North America since 2000 in the emerging green building movement.

11 Both of these advance prefabrication systems, UB and CLT, are potential game-changing technologies, showing the rest of the building industry where the future lies. While I am sure Japan is a leader in its own right when it comes to prefabrication, **Shimizu Singapore, with its strong parent R&D capability, can explore the use of these new technology systems in more of its building projects here.**

Conclusion

12 In the next few years, we should continue to see a healthy demand for the built environment sector. But we must be mindful of the need to meet this strong construction demand with **less reliance on foreign labour.**

The built environment sector has to adapt to the tightened labour supply and do things differently and more productively. Prefabrication in its various forms is certainly one of the ways to go to improve productivity.

13 Besides, the use of prefabrication technology makes sense in our highly built up urban environment in land scarce Singapore. As some building projects will inevitably take place near or in existing residential areas, **prefabrication can lower the impact of inconveniences to the surrounding residents.**

14 Also, more advanced prefabrication systems like UB and CLT will help **improve the working environment of the construction site and make careers in our industry more attractive to students.**

15 In conclusion, I believe Shimizu Singapore can do more to drive advancements in construction technology and productivity here in Singapore. And I look forward to working with strong partners like Shimizu to help us transform the construction industry and change the image of our sector.

Thank you.