

**SPEECH BY DR JOHN KEUNG, CEO, BCA, AT THE SINGAPORE UNIVERSAL DESIGN WEEK 2014, 5 NOVEMBER 2014, SUNTEC SINGAPORE CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE**

Mr Lee Yi Shyan,  
Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry and National Development  
Distinguished guests  
Ladies & gentlemen

**(A) Introduction**

1. A very good morning. Let me extend a warm welcome to all of you. Today marks the start of the inaugural Singapore Universal Design Week (SUDW) organised by the Building and Construction Authority or BCA. The Universal Design Conference starting this morning marks the beginning of the SUD Week and I am delighted to see the coming together of policy makers, academics, industry stakeholders and the many voluntary welfare organizations to network and share their knowledge in achieving an inclusive built environment through Universal Design or UD.

Inclusive and Liveable City

2. Similar to many other countries like Japan, Korea and Taiwan, Singapore is facing a fast greying population. As we prepare for the demographic challenge, an accessible and user-friendly built environment for the elderly and persons with different mobility needs becomes critically important as we aspire to be an inclusive and liveable city. To this end, we need to move beyond accessibility and focus on Universal Design.

**(B) Active Engagement**

3. Over the years, the BCA has been actively promoting user-friendly design concepts and working with industry stakeholders to implement Universal Design (or UD) features in their projects. Some of our professionals and developers have already embraced universal design and take it as the starting point in the design of their projects. However, we need more of our industry stakeholders to come on board. We also need to engage the public, private and people sectors (or 3P sectors), and facilitate dialogues and collaborations between the building industry and voluntary welfare organisations to work together in the area of accessibility and Universal Design. A great example is the formation of the tripartite Code Review Committee in the recent review of the Code on Accessibility that was implemented this year.
4. For better appreciation of Universal Design, we also organise other public outreach activities such as roving exhibitions, community events at libraries and tertiary institutions. We established the “InclUDed Movement” in April last year with a series of school engagement events and exhibitions called “Yoodee Town” so that our younger generation are more aware of the need for Universal Design. We have also started a Facebook page – just for Universal Design – that allows interested groups and individuals to share their thoughts and suggestions to spread the message about Universal Design.
5. This week, the “Yoodee Town” exhibition will be held at the Suntec City Mall West Atrium. Through fun and interactive exhibits, visitors will experience how their homes, parks, and public facilities, among others, can be designed to be friendly for the young and old, families with infants, and people with different abilities. So please join us at the Exhibition and bring your family members to experience all things UD.

**(C) SUDW Programme**

6. Another key programme in the SUD Week is this 2-day UD Conference. We have invited experts from various fields to share with us their expertise and experience in implementing Universal Design in different contexts, ranging from the macro perspective such as town planning and landscape design, to the micro scale of architecture and the home environment. We look forward to learning from them, and I am sure our industry stakeholders will use this opportunity to develop innovative and useful Universal Design concepts and apply them to their projects.
7. Indeed, outside the Conference Hall is the Products Showcase where you can meet with fellow industry professionals, developers and suppliers to learn about the latest Universal Design products, technologies and services that are available in the market.
8. You can also stop by BCA's "Experiential station", which allows participants to experience the challenges that persons with various mobility needs face when they negotiate steps, move on ramps, open doors, and transfer themselves from a wheelchair to the toilet seat.
9. In the same vein, we will hold "A Walk in the Park" at Gardens by the Bay this Saturday, when participants will be walking at a friendly pace alongside persons with different mobility needs – such as a wheelchair user, an elderly, people using crutches and the person with visual impairment – and experience first-hand the challenges they face. Along the route, participants will also get to see the various Universal Design features that made Gardens by the Bay a BCA Universal Design Mark Platinum winner this year.

**(D) Conclusion**

10. To conclude, we have planned many wonderful activities this Week and I invite you to join us. Most importantly, we hope that the Week's focus on Universal Design can spur all of us to make our built environment truly inclusive for everyone. With that, I wish you all a pleasant and enriching time during the Week. Thank you.