

**WELCOME SPEECH BY MR QUEK SEE TIAT, CHAIRMAN  
OF THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY AT  
THE SINGAPORE UNIVERSAL DESIGN WEEK 2015 ON  
MONDAY, 27 JULY 2015 AT 9.00AM, THE BCA ACADEMY  
ACADEMIC TOWER AUDITORIUM T1-1**

Mr Tan Chuan-Jin,

Minister for Social and Family Development

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

**(A) Introduction**

1. Thank you for joining us today at the opening of BCA's 2<sup>nd</sup> Singapore Universal Design Week, or SUDW in short.

2. The theme of the SUDW this year is “*Shaping an Age-friendly Built Environment*”. We have planned a series of activities during the Week to help raise awareness on the importance of creating an inclusive and age-friendly built environment. It is an excellent platform for industry professionals to share insights and explore how we can prepare for ageing-in-place and, more importantly, to create a more inclusive built environment for everyone.

3. Before I highlight the key aspects of the programme for the Week, please allow me to share our views on why the accessibility of our built environment and Universal Design are important in ensuring a future-ready Singapore.

## **(B) Ensuring social sustainability**

4. Life expectancy in Singapore is one of the highest in the world. By 2030, a mere 15 years from now, the number of elderly citizens is expected to reach 900,000, which is almost a quarter of our citizen population. It is therefore important that we consider the future challenges of an ageing population, and how this shift in our demographic structure will affect our society.

5. To ensure social sustainability, we need to empower individuals of all abilities to realise their aspirations and contribute to the society. For a start, our infrastructure and buildings need to be user-friendly, and cater to the varying needs of the population, be they older workers, mothers with very young children or persons with disabilities. This will encourage and help those who are capable, to join or remain in the workforce. To accommodate the needs of an increasingly diverse and ageing population, we need to ensure that our built environment is accessible and designed for all users.

6. BCA has and will continue to push the envelope to upgrade the accessibility of existing buildings, and to encourage building professionals and developers to use Universal Design as the starting point in their building design and operation.

### **(C) Highlights of Singapore Universal Design Week 2015**

7. Let me now turn to the programme for the week. This morning, you will have the opportunity to learn from many prominent overseas and local speakers at our conference and design workshop. They will be sharing their expertise in age-friendly design approaches and experiences in implementing UD using relevant case studies. I am sure what they have to share will enhance our understanding on issues relating to Universal Design, an inclusive built environment and quality of life. Besides the conference, participants of the UD Building Tour will be visiting three UD Mark award-winning buildings and see for themselves first-hand how UD concepts are being applied in those developments.

8. During the Week we will have a UD Forum which will facilitate discussion on designs related to accessibility and create greater awareness among building owners, developers and designers to provide innovative and user-friendly designs.

9. Last but not least, we will have something for our school children. To create ground support for UD, from users of the built environment, the best way is to start when they are young. To enhance the awareness and appreciation of UD features amongst school children, BCA has partnered selected shopping malls to host guided UD Tours for primary school students. The students have recorded what they have learnt through art, and their artworks will be showcased in a public exhibition called the “UD Explorers Exhibition” at Westgate Mall.

10. We believe that these outreach activities will promote greater interaction between the industry stakeholders and create increased awareness among the public, especially among our younger generation, of the critical importance of UD in building an inclusive society.

#### **(D) Conclusion**

11. In conclusion, I urge all of us to play our part in making Singapore a more friendly and inclusive society for all. We have made good progress but we must continue to keep at it. I wish all of you a very fruitful and enriching time participating in this Week's activities. Thank you.

**-- END OF SPEECH --**