

SPEECH BY MR S ISWARAN, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, AT THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY OF UNITED WORLD COLLEGE OF SOUTH EAST ASIA'S SECOND CAMPUS, 1000 HRS, 17 JUNE AT TAMPINES STREET 73.

Distinguished guests,

Teachers, parents and students,

Ladies and gentlemen

Introduction

1. A very good morning to all. I am pleased to be here with you today at the groundbreaking ceremony for the second campus of the United World College of South East Asia, UWCSEA.

A New Chapter

2. UWCSEA was one of the first international schools established in Singapore. The school originally opened as the 'Singapore International School' in 1971, with a first year cohort of around 950 students. Today, it is the largest school in the global network of UWC schools (that stretches from Swaziland to Bosnia and Herzegovina) and has over 3,300 students, aged between four and 18. Since its founding, over 20,000 students, representing some 60 nationalities, have graduated from the College. There are now few countries in the world where a graduate of the United World College of South East Asia cannot be found. The establishment of this new campus will mark a new and significant chapter in the College's 38-year history.

3. Many of the UWCSEA alumni have gone on to distinguished careers in business, academia and philanthropy, in Singapore and around the globe – and, in the case of astronaut Akihiko Hoshide (*Akee-HEEko Ho-SHEEday*), above it! What they all have in common is that they called Singapore home during their formative school years.

4. Students from the College have also added to the rich social fabric in their community through various Service Programmes. The UWCSEA students have worked with day care centres for the elderly, physically and intellectually disabled in Singapore, and have volunteered for regional causes as well. As part of the Community Education Program, UWCSEA has also opened many of its courses and camps to members of the public, thereby making itself a part of the community in Singapore.

5. The decision by the Singapore Government to support the expansion of this internationally renowned school is a mark of our commitment to develop and expand Singapore as a key economic and educational hub in the region. We remain committed to facilitating the provision of world-class educational facilities for the resident and transient international community, who consider Singapore their home.

6. By 2015, nearly 5,400 students will be enrolled in the two campuses of UWCSEA. This expansion will effectively double the number of students, who will have the opportunity to experience the College's unique educational programme, and also introduce many more students to Singapore. In turn, we hope that this will provide Singapore with a growing network of friends throughout the world.

7. The significant long-term commitment made by UWCSEA to move forward with the development of this second campus reflects its confidence that Singapore will continue to provide a stable and attractive business environment in the long run. Even as we tackle the pressing economic issues of today, we are also building the infrastructure and capabilities needed to realise our vision of a global city. International schools are an essential part of that architecture.

Green school

8. Singapore has always been concerned with our environment, and the need to be a lively and liveable city with sustainable growth. In April this year, the Government unveiled a blueprint of new targets and initiatives to improve our resource efficiency and enhance Singapore's urban environment. Efforts will be made to further improve our air quality, expand and open up green and blue spaces, conserve biodiversity and enhance the energy efficiency of our buildings and industry. These efforts will ensure that our urban environment remains attractive, even as Singapore continues to grow and develop.

9. I am, therefore, heartened to learn that the design for this new campus includes comprehensive and innovative measures aimed at achieving the Greenmark Platinum award, which is the highest green building rating available from Singapore's Building and Construction Authority (BCA). The design of the new campus features many creative ideas from the UWCSEA and JTC project management teams that reduce energy and water consumption by over 30 per cent as compared to other buildings of similar size. The campus also showcases many innovative green "firsts" for tropical regions, such as an innovative air-conditioning design for the education blocks, which is powered by solar thermal technology.

10. I understand that UWCSEA intends to use the new campus itself as a hands-on teaching tool for environmental education. This will enliven the lessons and endow students with a heightened awareness of the environmental challenges that we face, and what we can do as individuals and as a society to mitigate the impact. Efforts such as this, together with

initiatives and programmes in Singapore schools to raise environmental awareness among our students, will contribute significantly to Singapore's clean and green efforts.

Conclusion

11. UWCSEA has had a long and successful history in Singapore. With this new campus, I am confident that UWCSEA will continue to be an important part of our educational landscape and help Singapore attract and anchor high value organisations that will contribute to our development as a knowledge intensive economy.

12. This ground-breaking celebration is the culmination of a long journey entailing the vision, collaboration and efforts of many parties. I wish the College and its partners, MTI, JTC and EDB, as well as its teachers, students, parents and staff, all the very best in the establishment of this new campus.

13. I look forward to the continued success of UWCSEA as one of the region's leading international schools, and as a nucleus for the development of the next generation of global citizens.

14. Thank you.