

## **NUS 2017 Designing Resilience in Asia**

Opening Speech by Prof Tan Eng Chye,  
Dy President & Provost

16 Aug 2017, 8:30 am  
Shaw Foundation Alumni House, Auditorium

Distinguished Guests, Colleagues and Friends,

A very good morning to everyone and I bid you a warm welcome to the Third Designing Resilience in Asia International Symposium and Design Competition, organized by the NUS School of Design and Environment.

Over the past two decades, NUS has made great strides in our pursuit of academic excellence. It is today, regarded as a leading university in Asia and amongst the finest in the world. But beyond rankings and international stature, as Singapore's flagship public university, NUS seeks to impact, serve and give back to the community which we are in. To this end, NUS faculty and students have initiated and sustained a wide range of community programmes and activities, contributing talents, expertise and knowhow for the greater good of society and community.

In this regard, the NUS School of Design and Environment has been actively partnering with international organisations to address different resilience and sustainable built environment issues for the communities in Singapore, the region and the world. For example, last year, the School of Design and Environment signed a Memorandum of Understanding with United Nations Habitat and the City Resilience Profiling Programme to provide national and local governments with tools for measuring and increasing resilience to multi-hazard impacts, including those associated with climate change. As part of this collaboration, NUS and Designing Resilience in Asia were present at the United Nations Habitat III World Conference in Quito, Ecuador that was held in October last year, where the work done by the universities was viewed by more than 50,000 participants.

In early 2017, the School of Design and Environment joined the research alliance between NUS and the Dutch applied research institute Deltares, to create the new Singapore Centre on Urban Resilience, also known as SeCURE. The Centre will focus on

Urban Water Resilience, Climate Adaptation, High Density Living and Flood Risk. The Centre seeks to contribute to solving relevant and pressing urban resilience challenges for Southeast Asian cities, such as climate change induced flooding and droughts.

Today's Designing Resilience in Asia International Symposium and Design Competition is another flagship initiative by the School of Design and Environment, to work with partners from across the globe to make meaningful contributions to communities beyond Singapore. Launched in 2014, Designing Resilience in Asia aims to promote and foster a substantive research and discussion about innovative design ideas and planning propositions towards the resilience of Asian cities, which are contending with the strains of rapid urbanization and population changes, as well as to the environmental challenges caused by climate change.

Designing Resilience in Asia has provided a unique platform to bring together budding students from Architecture and related disciplines from 10 participating universities across Asia, Australia, Europe and North America, some of whom come from places that are affected by extreme weather events, and others who have been involved in research in this area. Together, they will harness their ideas and experiences to explore designs and research to strengthen the resilience of Asian cities.

For students, the design competition attunes you to the realities, needs that are at times competing, and challenges facing Asian communities affected by climate change and that are prone to natural disasters, as well as the social responsibilities and constraints faced by architects, planners and designers. With this authentic task in mind, students are challenged to consider and integrate what they have learned from different disciplines in their curriculum to come up with innovative solutions. This is a valuable opportunity for bright young minds to showcase their talents, exchange ideas with students from different parts of the world, focusing on the same challenge but with different perspectives and experiences, and to be inspired about their roles and social responsibilities as future thought leaders and players in the field. To the students, you are creating and building the future, right here in Asia, arguably the most dynamic region of growth and advancement. I hope you are excited at the myriad opportunities and possibilities.

The accompanying Symposium offers a unique sharing and learning platform for academics, researchers, students, professionals and industry players amongst us today, to benefit from the discussions and reflections of ideas initiated by the design explorations.

I am pleased to share that Designing Resilience in Asia has matured, and the continued efforts are now beginning to crystallize into a new initiative, the Designing Resilience in Asia Research Programme. We are excited about this new research programme initiative, as it will start with a publication to benefit future research and work in this field, and contribute to the thought leadership and development of concrete solutions to designing resilience in Asia.

On this note, I must also thank all the sponsors for their support towards this conference and its various initiatives. I wish the Third Designing Resilience in Asia International Symposium and Design Competition, as well as the new Research Programme, growth and success in the coming years. Thank you.