

**Welcome Address by NUS President Prof Tan Eng Chye,  
at the SkillsFuture Festival @ NUS 2019 Symposium  
24 July 2019, 9 am  
University Cultural Centre Theatre**

Mr Chee Hong Tat, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry &  
Ministry of Education

Mr Ng Cher Pong, CEO of SkillsFuture Singapore

Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome to the SkillsFuture Festival at NUS. It is an honour and a pleasure for NUS to host this event on our campus, and to bring 12 public Institutes of Higher Learning or IHLs together. Each IHL has their own strength and specialties; collectively, Singapore's IHLs offer a comprehensive suite of lifelong learning opportunities; there will be something for everyone. Our IHLs are also working closely with industry, keeping abreast with industry developments and manpower needs. We aim to curate and deliver meaningful, timely and relevant programmes for the workforce to upskill, reskill, and to stay competitive.

The theme for SkillsFuture Festival @ NUS is "Industry 4.0 and the Future of Skills". This morning, we have a line-up of distinguished speakers, who have important messages to convey. Senior Minister of State Mr Chee Hong Tat will be announcing some exciting developments relating to SkillsFuture; my Senior Deputy President and Provost, Teck Hua, and Mr Sopnendu Mohanty, CIO of the Monetary Authority of Singapore will be delivering keynote speeches on the very relevant theme of Industry 4.0 and what it means for organisations.

Thankfully, I have been assigned the shortest and easiest job, which is to deliver a welcome address. Let me this keep this short and light. There are only two points I would like to make.

## **1. NUS supports the SkillsFuture Movement**

First, NUS strongly supports the SkillsFuture movement. SkillsFuture is a bold and brilliant initiative that the Singapore Government has embarked on, so that every Singaporean can continually learn, fulfil one's potential, and ride on the exciting opportunities presented by Industry 4.0.

The first industrial revolution was characterised by machines and mechanization, made possible by the advent of steam and water power. Then came electricity, which lighted up the world and powered many new innovations from transport, communications, to machinery and appliances. Industry 3.0 saw computers, electronics and robotics coming into the forefront. We are now living in Industry 4.0, the era of smart machines, big data, networked technologies and the internet of things.

Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat has said that for the first time, the industrial revolution is not just happening to Asia, but that it is occurring right here in Asia, with many Asian companies being among the most innovative and best regarded businesses in the world. Previously, during the dot-com era, we would look on and marvel in amazement, from a distance, at technology giants like eBay, Amazon and Google bursting into the scenes, and for their products and services to be rolled out from the US, to the rest of the world. But today, there is innovation right here in Asia (take Grab or Tencent for example); Asia is also home to industries, markets and consumers. We must all be ready to participate in this growth.

As with all industrial revolutions, jobs are going to change; the nature of work is going to fundamentally change. Many of the emerging roles and skills in demand are in areas like artificial intelligence, machine learning, data analytics and various IT aspects such as cybersecurity.

The future economy is one where digitalisation holds the key to unlock much of the productivity and innovation potential of businesses. SkillsFuture presents the platform for you to acquire, deepen and accelerate the right digital skillsets and mindsets. Take a look at the Industry Transformation Maps and Skills Frameworks that have been developed by MTI and the various industries; you can chart your own learning journey and career development paths, according to your interests, aspirations and inclinations.

## **2. NUS is preparing our Graduates for a World of Lifelong Learning**

My second point today is that NUS is committed to preparing our graduates for a world of lifelong learning. NUS initiated a Lifelong Learners Programme, which is the first in any university around the world - NUS enrolment is valid for 20 years. Learning does not end after graduation; our graduates enjoy automatic enrolment into all our continuing education programmes and we will share a lifelong relationship with them.

Beyond curating continuing education courses, our core education system at NUS aims to help all students become more intellectually versatile, to prepare them for a future of lifelong learning. Our curriculum has moved beyond introducing breadth requirements, to creating many pathways for students to pursue double majors or major-minor combinations, to be trained in more than one discipline.

We also recognise that it is critical to strengthen the horizontal foundation competencies through a solid general education programme, so that students can engage with deep learning across a broad range of specialisations in future, wherever their careers take them. Through General Education, all students will engage in inquiry and discussions about social, cultural, scientific and historical topics that will lay the foundations for important life skills such as critical thinking, communication and reasoning. The General Education framework has a forward thinking orientation with new skills in Computational Thinking and Design Thinking being embedded.

Before I conclude, I would like to encourage everyone to take time to explore and experience the SkillsFuture Festival. There is an exciting programme lined up. Later this afternoon, there will be workshops and taster classes; for those of you have not stepped into a classroom for some years now, you may be surprised how much learning modes and delivery have changed – it is no longer just chalk and talk, or closed book exams in an examination hall. Learning today is far more flexible, interactive and experiential. There is also an ongoing exhibition on how Industry 4.0 is transforming business operations in the corporate world, and how the IHLs are pushing the advancement of technology through collaborative research with industry.

On this note, I wish everyone a pleasant and fulfilling day. Thank you