

**INAUGURATION SPEECH BY ER. CHONG KEE SEN, PRESIDENT
OF THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, SINGAPORE, AT THE 48TH
IES AGM ON 24 MAY 2014 AT 1.30 PM AT KENT RIDGE GUILD
HOUSE**

Presidents Emeritus;

Council Members and IES members;

Good afternoon;

Introduction

1. It is a great honour to be appointed as the 25th President of IES. As Professor SK Chou transfers the symbolic medallion over from his neck to mine, I acknowledge the duties and responsibilities bestowed upon me. Well, if you observe closely, Professor Chou appears taller today, probably because the weight of IES has been lifted from his shoulders.
2. Professor Chou, whom we affectionately call SK, has conceived many excellent initiatives during his term that will bring IES to the next order of professionalism and vibrancy. Under SK's leadership, with the assistance of the council and the support of our members, IES has achieved significant milestones in the past two years.
3. So, I would like to invite everyone to put your hands together to thank our immediate president Emeritus, Professor SK Chou.
4. I will endeavour to do my best to ensure that IES follows through with these initiatives and fulfil our vision to be the heart and voice of engineers.

Macro Perspectives of Engineering Profession

5. Engineers play instrumental roles in all sectors of the economy, including the built-environment, manufacturing, transportation, information communication and other industries. Engineers therefore play key roles in industries that contribute to more than half the Singapore's GDP.
6. The starting salary of engineers has increased by between 12 to 16% over the past five years. However, there is still room for higher salary, especially for mid-level engineers.
7. Engineers are important because we generate wealth for our economy and create innovations that enhance the quality of life of our people.
8. However, engineers like other professions, also face challenges. For example, engineers from the built-environment industry have to deal with professional responsibilities and adequate compensation for their work. Engineering companies have to deal with productivity and labour crunch. Engineers at large have to manage career development, recognition, compensation while maintaining a work-life balance. Like other professions, we, too, have to look at ways to enthuse bright young minds to take up a career in engineering. We need more engineers to sustain Singapore's economic growth.

IES: The Next Lap

9. With this as the background, IES will strategise our direction forward to remain relevant to the society and our members.

10. A fellow member asked me recently, “So, Kee Sen, what is your game-changer for IES?”
11. I have been pondering over this for the past several months.
12. ‘Game-changer’ or ‘game-changing’ are simple words with profound definitions.
13. It could mean a complete change of plan, meaning to conceive an entirely new plan; or it could mean keeping the existing plan, but introducing elements that bring about managed changes that could propel IES forward in a significant way. For me, I am going for the latter, that is, to fine-tune the plan and manage it for continuity and sustainability.
14. With the support of the IES council, I have identified four main thrusts during my term:
 - a. Preserve the core and acknowledge the existing - We have to remember how we started and the core values that has brought us here today.
 - b. Reach out and broaden with depths into other engineering disciplines and industries - As the economy diversifies, so will the engineering profession. We need to bring them into our fold to ensure IES remains relevant.
 - c. Engage the young engineers - We want them to keep that fire of passion burning in young engineers and encourage them to remain in the profession in the long term. Once an engineer, forever an engineer.

- d. Enthuse bright young minds into engineering – We need to excite the younger generation and provide them opportunities to create objects that have engineering elements with their own hands. We could help them to get their engineering journey started first as a hobby and further develop this interest into a passion that could eventually lead to an engineering education and then a career.
15. For the next two years, IES will focus on a few core initiatives and doing them well. One of such initiatives is the annual IES National Engineers Day (NED). A year-long program that includes a two-day concerted effort to celebrate the work of engineers, NED will engage young engineers and enthuse the young into engineering. This event will provide an opportunity for IES to work with various stakeholders to reach out to the public and highlight to them why an engineering profession is a career of choice. This year, the two-day NED event with the theme: The Power To Create, will take place on the 18 and 19 July at NUS U-Town.
16. IES will also continue to hold the biannual IES World Engineers Summit (WES) to engage students and professionals both locally and internationally on the critical challenges confronting humanity arising from climate change.

WES will provide an opportunity for IES to gain visibility and share with the public on innovative solutions that engineers build to mitigate the effect of climate change and help us be resilient as we urbanise. WES 2015 together with NED 2015 will be held in July 2015.

17. Another core initiative will be the certification of Singapore Chartered Engineers. This is a programme to provide an additional benchmark for peer-review competence for all engineers and a guide for employers on engagement and compensation.
18. IES will also be looking at new projects that could deliver significant positive impact and benefits to IES and engineers at large. We will update you when these initiatives are finalised.
19. As Singapore celebrates its 50 years of nation building next year, IES will also be celebrating 50 years of development and progress in engineering. IES will be working with our presidents emeritus on a book on SG50 on Engineering to commemorate the contribution of engineers in our nation-building over the last 50 years.
20. IES will also focus on membership growth and membership diversity. We will also expand our public outreach and engagement with the community by featuring role models in engineering, hold outreach activities and embark on pro-active media engagements.

21. With the completion of the IES Green-mark platinum Building this year, additional facilities will be added to serve our members better. The new secretariat office will improve service and efficiency. Other spaces will be used for members' training and professional development and for members to interact, network and share experiences. This building will not only be functional and efficient. It will also be used for eco-tours where local and overseas visitors could learn and share about green and sustainable design and construction.

22. All these initiatives are like our babies - strong and healthy babies that could be nurtured into responsible adults. I am sure that you would gladly buy them milk powder from time to time to support their growth. We will also continue with fundraising efforts to top up our building fund for future facility developments.

Closing

23. My committed council and I will navigate the course ahead and, together with your support, we will face the challenges ahead and bring IES to the next level.

24. We have been receiving compliments from our members. We thank you for that. We do at times also receive shelling from our members. Sometimes the shelling is intense and could be worse than those that are thrown at us by our business clients. But, we love it.

25. We love it because through your responses, we can feel the fire in your bellies, the passion and the love you, like us, have for the engineering profession. This motivates us to work harder as we know we must not fail you. Together, let's work towards our vision to be the heart and voice of engineers. Thank you.