

Speech by Er. Chong Kee Sen, President, The Institution of Engineers, Singapore (IES),
at the Singapore Polytechnic School of Architecture & the Built Environment Graduation
Ceremony

Mr Tan Choon Shian, Principal & CEO of Singapore Polytechnic;

Distinguished guests and faculty members;

Graduates of the School of Architecture & the Built Environment;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning.

1. Today marks a significant milestone in the life of our graduating students. Congratulations for making it to the finishing line of your tertiary education. The diploma you will be receiving later is not just a piece of paper – it is a testament to an act of personal commitment, determination and perseverance. These attributes will carry you far in life.
2. It is an exciting time to be graduating from the School of Architecture & the Built Environment. Singapore is city–state with a small land area and a population of about 5.5 million. As Singapore continues to develop, innovative urban solutions are required to meet the needs and aspiration of our people. There are many opportunities for you to help Singapore remain a sustainable and liveable city with your skillsets.
3. Each of you could play an important role in realising Singapore’s Smart Nation vision. A smart and sustainable nation requires integration of

green buildings and infrastructures, seamless urban mobility solutions, sustainable environment, clean water and energy among others to create a vibrant lifestyle and good quality of life for all.

4. Climate change has influenced the design of buildings and infrastructures, and altered the way hotel and leisure facilities are managed. It has also changed the way vibrant events are managed, and challenged us to find other ways to resolve the various environmental and water challenges with an integration of activities within the Smart Nation initiatives. You can now collectively work together through seamless connectivity leveraging on digital technology and applications.

5. Some of you may be concerned about the global economic slow-down. However, with the government's aggressive plans to develop Singapore into a smart nation, your future career paths remain bright. With your newly-acquired academic qualifications, there will be many opportunities out there for your picking. But the key to long-term success is in continuous learning. I encourage you to keep developing your skills and capabilities to ensure your competitiveness in an ever-changing working landscape.

6. Continuous learning is also important in dealing with the increasingly complex working environment. You cannot just be working in silo behind your desk and rely solely on applying the knowledge that has been passed on to you by your lecturers. Instead, you are expected to apply inter-disciplinary knowledge. Therefore, it is important for you to develop breadth and depth including a variety of other skill sets.

7. Apart from technical skills, you would also be expected to lead teams and take ownership of your work. You have to take on tasks as a project lead and you will be assessed not only on your ability to work in a team but also on your ability to motivate and assist your team members to do well. Therefore, other than your IQ, your EQ will also play a significant role in helping you achieve good results. All these may sound daunting but as long as you continue to believe in yourself, put on a can-do attitude and strive to go beyond your comfort zone, you will be able to make good progress in your career.

8. I trust that your internship experience would put you in a better position to venture into the working world. I understand from your school that the internship program will be enhanced to become a structured programme with clear and specific learning outcomes. With mentoring support from the industries, it would deepen the students' learning and understanding of the industry.

9. From here, you could start working in the industry to put your acquired knowledge into use and sharpen your skills. I would like to stress again that education is a continuous journey. Continuous education will open up more routes for you. There are various schemes in the pipeline you can leverage on, such as the Skills-Future Earn and Learn Program.

10. For Civil Engineering graduates, I understand that a specialist diploma and advanced diploma in Civil Engineering will be rolled out in the later part of this year. These, as well as other degree courses, are

good options that you should consider as they would provide you with deeper knowledge and skills in identified key areas in Civil Engineering.

11. In closing, as you celebrate your achievements, I urge you to take the opportunity to show appreciation to your loved ones, your parents and your alma mater. This is because without their support, you might not be able to stand here today.

12. I wish you all the best in your endeavours. Thank you.