

Speech by Er. Chong Kee Sen, President, The Institution of Engineers, Singapore, at the Official Opening of the “Development of Marine & Offshore Engineering – Past, Present and Future” Public Lecture on Wednesday, 10 September 2014 at LT58A, Lecture Theatre, Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Mr Choo Chiau Beng, Senior Advisor, Keppel Corporation,

Members and Friends of IES,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

1. Singapore’s marine and offshore industry story has been an illustrious one. In the 1960s, Singapore is but a basic ship repair station and a builder of barges and tugboats. Today, fifty years later, we are a global marine and offshore leader with world-class shipyards. Singapore accounts for 70% of the world’s output of both jack-up rigs and the conversion of supertankers to Floating Production Storage Offloading vessels. The entire industry contributes a massive \$13 billion to our GDP every year, that is, 1.6% of GDP. The industry created about 20,000 jobs for Singaporeans, locally and abroad.

2. We are gathered here this morning to hear from our pioneer engineers about the spectacular transformation from the past to the present and to get some insights about the future of the marine and offshore industry.

3. The journey has been turbulent, marked with recession woes and other roadblocks. But the people in this industry, many of whom are engineers faced up to the challenges. Our engineers contributed to the industry with their technical knowhow and brilliant innovations. Singapore has many engineering-trained visionaries and industry captains who led the way in our transformation into a strong, resilient, world-class marine and offshore engineering hub.

4. Many exciting opportunities are continuing to unfold for Singapore in the marine and offshore engineering industry. Maritime traffic in Asia is continuing to grow, demand for energy and for exploration and production activities in deeper waters and harsher environments is continuing to increase. With Singapore's frontrunner position in jack-up rig construction, as well as her proximity to oil exploration and drilling activities in Australia, Vietnam, Malaysia and the Middle East, the marine and offshore industry in Singapore holds rich prospects.

5. But we cannot seize emerging opportunities if our younger generation do not step forth to continue the legacy of the pioneer generation of engineers. We need the brightest of minds and the most passionate of hearts to come forward to take up engineering roles in this industry, to continue to dream big and venture into uncharted waters.

6. This is where IES has a role to play – to engage and enthuse bright young minds into the marine and offshore engineering industry. To achieve this objective, IES holds the National Engineers Day, or NED, every year to give students hands-on opportunities to explore engineering, and instil a sense of curiosity and wonder in them. As for young engineers who have joined the profession, IES will be conducting the Young Engineers Leadership programme, whereby participants get to be equipped with leadership skills and technology management knowledge.

7. In addition, IES also puts the limelight on our prominent pioneer engineers, to show the younger generation the significant differences they have made to our society, economy and lives, and inspire them to do the same. As you know, engineers are normally down-to-earth and humble by nature. But we need engineers to be given greater prominence, and we do this through recognising them with awards such as the annual IES Prestigious Engineering Achievement Awards.

8. Today, we are embarking on yet another effort to excite young people to opt for engineering, with a Public Lecture looking at the “Development of Marine & Offshore Engineering – Past, Present and Future”. This will be the first in the IES Public Lectures series, which we are putting in place in celebration of both Singapore’s and IES’s 50th birthday.

9. At this lecture, we present the visionaries, the champions and the prominent personalities who have collectively placed Singapore on the global map of marine and offshore engineering. It is our aim that their life stories will inspire the younger generation. This lecture is also to celebrate the achievements and contributions of many who have brought the marine and offshore engineering to where we are today.

10. On behalf of IES, I would like to thank all our partners for supporting this event; and all the speakers for taking the time to share your experience, insights and perspectives with us. We treasure your support and your friendship, and look forward to many more opportunities to work with you in the future.

11. Lastly, I urge those engineers who are not yet part of the IES family to join us. Collectively, we can work together to promote the engineering profession and engage the young to embark on an exciting and enriching career in engineering. Thank You.