

Speech by Er. Edwin Khew, President, The Institution of Engineers, Singapore, at  
Opening Ceremony of the National Engineers Day 2016  
at 11 am on Saturday, 23 July 2016 at HDB Hub Atrium at Toa Payoh

Mr Ng Chee Meng, Acting Minister for Education (Schools)

Distinguished guests,

NED partners,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Boys and girls,

Good morning.

1. A very warm welcome to the seventh National Engineers Day 2016 or NED 2016 in short. On behalf of The Institution of Engineers, Singapore, or IES, I would like to thank Mr. Ng Chee Meng, Acting Minister for Education (Schools) for gracing our event as the Guest-of-Honour today. We are deeply honoured with your presence.
2. For the past seven years, NED has been a focal point for enthusing the young about the marvels of engineering and exciting them about the opportunities in an engineering career. Throughout history, it has been engineers who have created products and processes that have solved the world's toughest problems. In Singapore, over the last 50 years, it has been engineers who have contributed to our national prosperity and who have helped us build Singapore to what it is today. For example, engineers have built Jurong Island into one of the most integrated chemical processing hubs in the world, our MRT systems that transport over 3 million people a day, our many highways & tunnels to cater to nearly 1 million

vehicles in Singapore, and our mobile telecom system to provide services to more than 8 million mobile phones users. The list goes on. All this is made possible by engineers.

3. But today, there is a growing problem in Singapore – we do not have enough engineers to help us build Singapore to bring us into the next 50 years. This could be because insufficient recognition has been given to engineers over the past few decades. This has resulted in a somewhat diminished standing of engineering as the top course of study and as one of the most important careers of choice for students in Singapore.
4. I am an engineer myself. For many of my fellow engineers and me, it is enough to see our work making a difference in our country, our community and our society. It is not in our DNA to seek recognition or accolades as we regard our work as our duty, like it is the duty of doctors to save lives in an emergency without asking to be recognised.
5. But at the same time, we also recognise the importance of bringing the work of engineers to the attention of the public, so that society can embrace it as a positive economic and social force, and so that the young will aspire to become engineers. These objectives drove IES to launch NED in 2010.
6. At NED 2016, as in past years, students and their parents can find out more about the exciting gamut of challenges waiting for our younger generation to address and the abundant career opportunities available in engineering, now and in the future.

7. Singapore's future development is going to be heavily engineering-centric. For example, it will be the engineers who will develop innovative solutions to realise our Smart Nation goals. It will be the engineers who will help us urbanise Singapore in a sustainable manner. It will also be the engineers who will have to help Singapore adapt to sea level rise caused by climate change and the melting ice caps in the North and South poles. We need engineers to design and build dykes and sea walls to protect Singapore from being inundated by such sea level rise. And again, it will be the engineers who will be the ones managing and maintaining the highly sophisticated robots who will be in the production lines of the future manufacturing plants in Singapore.
  
8. How many of you believe that you have what it takes to be part of this exciting future, not just as bystanders but as contributors? NED 2016, for this reason, has been themed "Engineers - Innovators & Creators of the Future". We hope that it will be the starting point for many of you in a career in engineering - the creators of our future.
  
9. NED is an event quite unlike any other, as it gives students unique opportunities to solve problems that are actually confronting mankind as we speak. It will host the final rounds of the Energy Innovation Challenge (EIC), a competition jointly organised by IES and the Science Centre Singapore, whereby students get to design or invent products demonstrating the use of alternative energy sources. I am happy to share with you that this year, EIC is seeing participation from a total of 81 student teams comprising 61 teams from local secondary schools, junior colleges, ITEs and polytechnics and 20 teams from local and foreign universities. This is a 13%

increase over its inaugural run in 2015. In addition, we continue to see strong support from volunteer professional engineering and business mentors – 49 this year – making EIC the competition with the largest industry participation by mentors of its kind in Singapore.

10. I am also pleased to share with you that with the support of SPRING Singapore, EIC has also added a new category this year – the Standards Award. This award will cultivate a stronger awareness and appreciation of the importance of standards in the production and system integration of renewable energy and energy efficiency systems, bringing about a cleaner and sustainable future to energy systems in Singapore.

11. Besides EIC, the organising committee of NED 2016 has planned a series of fun-filled exploration activities over the next two days for both students and their parents. We have decided to hold NED at HDB Hub this year, so that more can join us in discovering the wonders of engineering and engineering career opportunities.

12. IES would like to thank the Ministry of Education (MOE) for their support towards NED over the past few years. We hope that events such as NED will complement MOE's efforts in fostering a stronger interest in STEM subjects through experiential, out-of-classroom learning. We would also like to thank the National Research Foundation, SPRING Singapore, institutes of higher learning and other industry partners for their strong and continued support towards NED since it started.

13. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the winners of the IES Prestigious Engineering Achievement Awards 2016. Your outstanding work has not

only displayed the level of engineering excellence in Singapore, but will also inspire the younger generation to strive to do the same or better in future NED competitions. I would also like to congratulate the 12 outstanding engineering graduates from National Technological University (NTU) who will be receiving the IES Gold Medal today for their hardwork and accomplishments in their studies. IES is proud to honour your success and determination to excel in engineering.

14. In conclusion, I like to wish all of you a fun and rewarding time discovering the limitless possibilities of engineering over the next two days. I hope that some of the students with us here today will join us in building Singapore into a global engineering force and a center for engineering excellence.

Thank you.