

CLOSING REMARKS BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR (PRACTICE) YEO LI PHEOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR ADULT LEARNING, AT THE DIGITAL FUTURES OF WORK GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON 1 NOVEMBER 2023

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Good afternoon. It brings me great pleasure to join you today at this Digital Futures of Work Global Conference. As we draw the day's activities to a close, I would like to thank everyone for your active participation as we exchanged ideas and insights on how we may collectively steer the future of work, education, and learning in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) towards novel models of human-centricity, productivity and shared prosperity.

2. As we have discussed today, the findings from the Digital Futures of Work Research Programme have shown us how AI technologies, with its rapid advancements in human-like reasoning and generative capabilities, will profoundly transform the shape of knowledge work and trajectory for high-skilled workers in the economy. As we grapple with the new realities of the AI-economy, the research findings have reinforced that society at all levels will need to make wise choices on how best to use AI technologies to set organisations and society on a pathway towards higher productivity and agility, and embrace human-centric AI innovation in organisations, in ways that will best augment the potential of a highly-educated workforce.

3. In this regard, adult education and learning have an important part to play in preparing the workforce for the AI economy. Likewise, in the field of adult education and learning, AI is also revolutionising how we are going to learn and teach. It offers immense potential to make learning more engaging, personalised and accessible, to maximise its benefits for a much broader spectrum of learners, but as we have heard today, this requires us to carefully calibrate our educational structures and pedagogical approaches. We need to resist the temptation to use AI and digital platforms to unbundle our teaching and learning, but rather, to look to use AI to integrate the processes of acquiring knowledge, applying such knowledge practically, and fostering connections, thus empowering our learners.

4. We realise at the Institute for Adult Learning, an autonomous institute of the Singapore University of Social Sciences, that we have a pivotal role to play in contributing to these objectives, to support our adult educators and adult learning community to embrace AI technologies to deliver future-oriented and high-quality teaching and learning experiences. We are steadfast in our commitment to harness our research findings to inform our use of AI technologies in education and instructional practices, through pedagogically-grounded and robust ways. As echoed

by many of you today, we are committed to delivering this with a strong focus on holistic capability development, to keep learners and the learning process integrated, and ensure that learning remains inclusive, equitable, and up-to-date with developments in the AI economy, even amid disparities in digital access.

5. In dealing with the complex economic and social challenges presented by the AI economy, platforms like this Conference are vital to encourage active engagement with a wide range of ideas and perspectives at a global scale. The Conference has brought us together, whether we are academics, policymakers, corporate strategists, technologists, human resource practitioners, or learning experts. We hope to have encouraged mutual learning, the exchange of experiences, and the germination of innovative ideas, and thus, to identify issues that we need to work on and enable bold new ways of thinking, as we support each other in making well-informed decisions that serve the best interests of society. I have no doubt that the conversations that we have had today here at the Digital Futures of Work Global Conference will be very important. I hope that it has set the groundwork for ongoing dialogue and collaborative synergy at the global level.

6. As we conclude, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to those who have made this global conference possible today.

- Firstly, the research team of the Digital Futures of Work Research Programme, for your persistence over the last four years, in collecting and analysing large amounts of data and evidence, and synthesising them into new knowledge and transformative insights that have enriched our collective understanding of how AI technologies will transform the future of work and learning. Of particular mention is Professor Phillip Brown of Cardiff University who has steered this team of researchers. This programme was jointly hosted by Cardiff University and IAL, with the University of Bristol and the University of Oxford's Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance as programme partners.
- Next, SkillsFuture Singapore, for supporting and funding this research programme.
- Our presenters and panellists, several of whom have made the journey from many different parts of the world to be with us in-person today – thank you for contributing insightful perspectives that have greatly enriched our discussions.

- Last but not least, all of you, our delegates, for your active and engaging participation, which has certainly contributed to the success of this conference.

7. In closing, I would like to emphasise again that the realm of possibilities with AI is boundless, and it falls upon all of us collectively to harness the potential of AI to empower individuals, enhance learning, and drive economic growth, for the greater good of all.

8. Thank you.