

ADDRESS BY MR DESMOND TAN, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE, PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL, NTUC AT THE LEARNING ENTERPRISE ALLIANCE AWARD CEREMONY 2024 ON 29 AUGUST 2024

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good morning to everyone.

I first want to start off by thanking the Institute of Adult Learning or IAL for your dedication in promoting continuous education and development within our workforce.

Thank you so much for your time.

1. We are on the brink of major changes in Singapore's economy and our workforce, driven by several key trends, which I believe many of you will be also quite familiar.
2. First, the rapid developments and advancements of automation, of AI, of digital technologies, are reshaping industries at an unprecedented rate. According to the World Economic Forum, around 85 million jobs will be disrupted by AI. By 2025 — that's not very far from here. By the same time, around 93 million new jobs will emerge, and this aligns with the division, or evolving division of labour between humans, machines and even algorithms.
3. Second trend — the green economy under the Singapore green plan 2030, is set to create new job opportunities and also transform industries. This will heighten the demand for green technologies, as well as sustainability skill sets, necessitating the need for us to adapt to work or jobs that are also aligned to our environmental goals.
4. Lastly, the third key trend is that non-linear career paths are become more and more common. Workers are transiting into fields beyond their original training or learning in schools, making transferable skills more pertinent and more valuable than ever.

5. Given these strengths, workplace learning must also become more and more essential. We anticipate a growing demand for diverse learning methods, whether it is micro learning, mobile learning, coaching, organisational development, personalized development plan, to ensure that our workforce remain agile and remain competitive.
6. I am truly heartened to see that IAL continues to champion workplace learning as a catalyst for transformation across both the SMEs, as well as the MNCs. Companies like Fei Siong Group as well as Advancer Global Facility, both part of the IAL's Learning Enterprise Alliance (LEA), have effectively utilised workplace learning to drive digitalisation and career development for their employees.
7. Fei Siong, for example, successfully upskilled 70 per cent of their older workers and implemented cashless payment systems, enhancing productivity and customer experience. Similarly, Advancer Global Facility has focused and adopted smart facility management systems to align with evolving industry standards, elevating the workforce competencies in the process.
8. While these are companies that have early successes, we also know that some may face challenges in implementing some of these measures. But rest assured that you are not alone. I'm sure the Government has many schemes and policies in place to support you.
9. At NTUC, we also support companies through the Company Training Committee, or CTC in short. Since its launch in 2019, CTCs have institutionalised training for business transformation, delivering win-win outcomes, both for the employers and enterprises, as well as for workers.
10. Today, NTUC has formed over 2,300 CTCs and trained over 200,000 workers across the various sectors and industries. These efforts have resulted in increased

productivity, better business outcomes, as well as sustainable improvements in wages and work prospects for all our workers.

11. Let me perhaps use a success story to share with all of us on both the utility of CTC as well as LEA and how these two can come together. And this is a story of Netatech Engineering, a company focused on urban solutions. After forming CTC in 2022, Netatech embarked on the Operations and Training Road-mapping, and joined the Labour Movement as a unionised company under the Singapore Industrial & Services Employees' Union, which I happen to be the Executive Secretary as well.

12. In 2023, Netatech also spearheaded a workplace learning project together under the IAL Centre for Workplace Learning and Performance. And as David Tan, Netatech Founder and CEO aptly put it, and I quote him: *“Our organisation has been reborn—each day pulses with the energy of Sprints, turning every meeting into a session of spirited and swift problem-solving.”*

13. While the LEA project not only enhanced team performance, but it also instilled a learning-as-we-work mindset by integrating agile practices and digital tools. Keno Chan, an engineering consultant of Netatech — who I believe is here with us — shared that the LEA project helped him see the importance of adaptability and continuous learning. And he said, I quote, *“It's not just about completing tasks anymore—it's about striving for excellence and pushing the boundaries of what's possible.”*

14. Amidst these rapid changes driven by AI and sustainability, one group that stands out to be affected is also our mature or senior workers. As of 2020, around one in four Singapore resident workers are aged 55 and older, and recent data from 2023 also shows a rising median age in our local labour force.

15. As our enterprises progress, it is crucial that mature workers also keep pace with technological advancements. And I believe that their deep industry knowledge and workplace experience, when correctly harnessed, can be a real asset for enterprises and companies, to increase productivity and also to innovate new practices.
16. While having said all this today, we are also here to witness the signing of MOUs and I'm really honored to be able to witness several MOUs. They will further empower not just our employers and enterprises, but also our employees and our workers.
17. IAL will be partnering NTUC's e2i to enhance the integration of mature workers into enterprises, focusing on creating inclusive workplaces and connecting mature workers with new job opportunities.
18. Additionally, IAL will also sign a MOU with SBS Transit and the Singapore Business Advisors & Consultant Council to address critical industry needs in leadership, HR, finances and procurement, workplace-based learning.
19. These MOUs signal the criticality of collaboration to expand our capabilities to also extend our networks to achieve positive outcomes, both for the employers and the employees.
20. This year, I'm also delighted to see another 32 companies join the Learning Enterprise Alliance, bringing the network to close to 160 members. Congratulations to LEA for your achievements and also congratulations to all the award recipients today.
21. I am confident that we will hear of more successes in uplifting employees' wages, welfare and work prospects in time to come. I am also pleased to announce that IAL will soon pilot a new Graduate Diploma in Workplace Learning. This program

will include learners with the skills needed to develop organisational and learning strategies, ensuring a new generation of leaders in workplace.

22. Let me conclude. As we continue this journey of transformation through workplace learning, let us commit to continuous lifelong learning, development and growth. As Prime Minister Lawrence Wong once said, and I quote him: “***The journey of learning never stops – it’s what keeps us adaptable, resilient and ready for the future.***” So let us embrace this mindset to ensure every learning opportunity drives innovation, excellence, and a brighter future for us all.

23. Thank you.