

Embargoed till delivery
Please check against delivery

SPEECH BY MR PHILIP YEO, CHAIRMAN,
AGENCY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH
(A*STAR), AT THE LAUNCH OF GROWING ENTERPRISES WITH
TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE (GET-UP) INITIATIVE
AND SEND-OFF CEREMONY FOR TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE
(T-UP) PIONEER SECONDEES,
ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY 2003 AT 4:00 PM,
AT THE INSTITUTE OF MICROELECTRONICS (IME)

Friends and Colleagues, Good afternoon to all of you here.

- 1. Let me take this opportunity to wish one and all "Gong Xi Fa Cai!"**
- 2. As we usher in the Year of the Goat, I am very pleased to announce the launch of a multi-agency initiative, "Growing Enterprises with Technology Upgrade" or in short, "GET-Up" aimed at creating long-term benefits for our growth-oriented Singapore Enterprises.**

3. GET-Up is a concerted effort of four government agencies, A*STAR, EDB, IE Singapore and SPRING Singapore to pro-actively reach out to Singapore Enterprises in the manufacturing sector and give them ready access to technology capabilities which will help them achieve what I call the real 3 Gs of "Grow, Glow and Globalise".

4. Singapore Enterprises who have the ambition and potential to "grow" in business scope and size, "glow" profitably and gain global market presence will be actively encouraged and nurtured through the GET-Up initiative.

5. We hope they see themselves as "Global Enterprises in the making".

6. I am happy to announce today, that 12 scientists and engineers from A*STAR's Research Institutes have been successfully seconded to our local industry, under the Technology Upgrade (T-Up) Programme. The T-UP programme is a joint initiative, launched in August last year by Minister Lim Boon Heng.

7. As Singapore aspires to be a Knowledge-Based Economy (KBE), Innovation and Intellectual Property creation will be critical success factors for Singapore Enterprises to survive and thrive. In the highly competitive global market place, Singapore Enterprises cannot afford to rest on their past successes or adopt a "defeatist" attitude.

8. There are many examples of Singapore Enterprises that have persevered and continued to innovate and experiment with new products, processes and ideas, even in the downturn. Singapore Enterprises can grow and succeed by developing the capability and capacity to innovate and rapidly move up the economic value chain.

9. In August 2002, the Technology Upgrade Programme, or in short "T-Up", was launched with the aim of helping Singapore Enterprises upgrade their R&D capabilities through the secondment of experienced researchers from A*STAR research institutes. These researchers, with their expertise and access to state-of-the-art facilities in the A*STAR institutes, can help the Singapore Enterprises identify, develop and implement leading-edge technologies that can reap commercial value.

10. At the same time, they can also train and build up the R&D human capital in the industry, so as to face the challenges of the increasingly competitive economic environment, where product life cycles are becoming shorter than before.

11. Since the launch of the T-Up programme last August, 12 research scientists and engineers from A*STAR research institutes (RIs) have been successfully seconded to our local industry under this programme.

12. We have also received excellent response from our local industry. More than 80 companies have approached A*STAR RIs to enquire about the details of the programme. Many have also requested for secondment of researchers particularly in the areas of electronics, precision engineering, infocomm and chemicals.

13. Many of these companies are promising enterprises, with good potential for fast growth. For example, Wangi Industrial grew from a small hot stamping and printing company to a 220-strong global supplier of pad-printing solutions. The company counts among its clients leading IT multinationals such as Siemens, HP, Motorola, Epson and many others.

14. Wangi's engineers are now embarking on precision optics manufacturing activities. They were particularly interested in adopting the latest technology advances in the field of optics and photonics. When they accepted the invitation to participate in the T-Up programme, they requested for help in acquiring capabilities in the manufacturing process of a high-end complex mirror design for medical instruments.

15. A*STAR's Singapore Institute of Manufacturing Technology (SIMTech) had the expertise they were looking for. We found them a match in one of the researchers working in the SIMTech. SIMTech's researcher, Mr. Lee Kam Sung has since joined Wangi in early January 2003.

16. Through our meetings with the companies, we realised that many of our local enterprises have a strong ambition to upgrade and grow. We shall refer to them as Growing Enterprises, or GEs in short. The aspirations of these GEs have inspired us to take a step further.

17. There are currently a number of incentives and assistance schemes, provided by 4 government agencies. EDB has an Innovation Development Scheme to encourage and assist Singapore Enterprises to engage in the innovation of products, processes and applications. LETAS from SPRING Singapore to assist Singapore Enterprises to improve their productivity. IE Singapore's primary focus is to help growth enterprises to secure overseas market, create greater demand for their products and services. IE Singapore has double tax deduction (DTD), overseas manpower programme and other assistance for enterprises venturing overseas. A*STAR, through the T-Up Programme, will share talent and help transfer technology to the industry.

18. Each agency offers assistance to address specific industry needs within the agency's charter. We need an integrated and coordinated approach to harness all the capabilities of the various schemes and incentives and help Singapore Enterprises grow to be Global Enterprises by overcoming their financial, human resource and technology constraints.

19. Hence, we formed the GET-Up Team comprising senior staff from A*STAR, EDB, IE Singapore and SPRING Singapore. This GET-Up Team will pro-actively aim to visit 500 selected Singapore Enterprises with growth potential. Many of these companies are seated here in this auditorium.

20. The GET-Up Team will help to identify and ascertain their difficulties in finance, human resource as well as technology, and utilise various tools from the different agencies to resolve these problems. A*STAR, EDB, IE Singapore and SPRING Singapore's concerted effort to help grow Singapore Enterprises is timely.

21. We hope the efforts invested in "Growing Enterprises with Technology Upgrade" will help our local enterprises "GET-Up" and be ready to accelerate their growth in the next economic upturn.

22. I will also like to take this opportunity to wish our pioneer batch of T-Up secondees good luck in their challenging journey ahead. We look forward to hearing your success stories in the industry.

23. On that note, let me once again wish you all a Happy and Prosperous Lunar New Year.