

**OPENING ADDRESS BY MS. JACQUELINE POH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GOVTECH**

**EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT COURSE:
“DIGITAL GOVERNMENT FOR TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS
SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES – THE SINGAPORE
EXPERIENCE”**

**2 April 2018 (Monday), 0930-0940hrs
Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, Singapore**

Mr Chae Gun Chung, Head of the United Nations Project Office on
Governance (UNPOG)

Mr. Arndt Husar, Deputy Director for the United Nations Global Centre for
Public Service Excellence,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning, dear friends, and a warm welcome to all, especially
to our overseas guests who have flown in for this course.

2. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural
executive development course titled: “*Digital Government for
Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies - The
Singapore Experience*”.

3. We are honoured to work with the United Nations Project Office on
Governance (UNPOG) under the United Nations Department of
Economics and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and the United Nation
Development Programme (UNDP)’s Global Centre for Public Service
Excellence (GCPSE), to bring this course to Singapore.

4. I am pleased to have with us fellow government officials from other Small Island Developing States (or SIDS), as well as government representation from the Land-Locked Developing States, the Asia-Pacific, as well as the East African regions. Singapore has a long tradition of assisting developing economies in their capability building efforts. For example, as a small island state ourselves, we are fully aware of the vulnerabilities and recognises the unique challenges faced by our fellow SIDS. We have been sharing our development experience through the Singapore Cooperation Programme run by our Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1992 and to date, we have trained some 8,800 SIDS government officials in wide ranging subjects from sustainable development to public governance and economic development. I am glad that GovTech is able to add to this rich tradition by sharing our digital government journey with my fellow SIDS colleagues.

5. Finally, I'm also pleased to welcome my ASEAN friends who are here with us today. This year is especially meaningful for Singapore, as ASEAN Chairman, to have you join us for this course. As part of our vision to bring the ASEAN community closer together, Singapore has announced that ASEAN would set up a smart cities network. I'm confident that a good foundation in laying this network is our own digitalisation efforts in our respective governments. We will share our efforts and I look forward to hearing from those of you who have embarked on this same transformative journey.

People is at the Heart of Government Digital Transformation

6. Many terminologies are popularly used to describe the age we live in today. The World Economic Forum (WEF) calls it the "Fourth Industrial

Revolution”. Some calls it the age of the “Rise of the Machines”. Whatever and however you want to name it, what is without ambiguity – is that the accelerated pace of technology lies at the heart of the changes and disruptions in the world today, affecting economies, industries, people in our societies and in government.

7. At GovTech Singapore, we are excited by the positive impact that the harnessing of emerging technologies such as Big Data and Artificial Intelligence will allow us to do – serve our citizens better, improve their quality of lives, help generate good jobs and facilitate more industry innovations. To enable this, Singapore will be launching the Digital Government Blueprint (DGB) 2020 very shortly to the public. Building on the foundations of previous e-government masterplans, the DGB will guide the government to better exploit data and harness new technologies to support efforts to build a digital economy and society for our Smart Nation. The DGB also details the outcomes we hope to achieve at the citizens, government and agencies’ level to create a truly Smart Nation for Singapore. Our vision is to for the Government to be “Digital to the Core”. At the heart of this transformation journey is people. We want government talent that is equipped with new capabilities to maximise the advantages these technologies potentially can offer us. With this in mind, the Singapore Government is committed, under the DGB, to set up capability centres in a number of emerging technologies: Data Science and Artificial Intelligence; Application Design; Development and Deployment of ICT Infrastructure; Cybersecurity; and Sensors and Internet of Things. These capability centres will house a multidisciplinary teams of data scientists, software developers and UX designers who are able to advise government

agencies looking to implement innovative projects within the Singapore Government.

8. We see similar efforts across our region as governments work to equip their leaders to utilise new technologies to serve our citizens better. Hence, we believe in such exchanges as we have in this course, each bringing your points of views and experiences to bear as we learn from each other. We believe strongly in an open environment where governments will benefit from being open through active engagement with each other.

Closing

9. While the Executive Development Course is based on Singapore's digital government experiences, we are fully cognizant that your own environment may be different and will call for different responses. Nonetheless, it is our hope that issues and experiences that you will explore over this week will provide you with insights and tools necessary to meet your own challenges in your home environment.

10. Just as much as we are happy to share our perspectives, we would also like to learn from your unique experiences and challenges. We encourage you to participate freely and express your views during the course so that meaningful learning and exchanges can take place in conversations between and among us.

11. On that note, I wish you all a fruitful and enriching week ahead, and a memorable stay in Singapore.

12. Thank you.