

**WELCOME REMARKS BY SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MR DESMOND LEE, AT THE WORLD
CITIES SUMMIT YOUNG LEADERS SYMPOSIUM, 10 JULY 2016,
SINGAPORE**

Introduction

1. A very good Morning to all of you, World Cities Summit Young Leaders! Welcome to the 3rd World Cities Summit Young Leaders Symposium.
2. I am heartened to see many familiar faces at breakfast earlier, from New York and the year before in Singapore. So I would like to acknowledge Hsing Yao, Hazem Galal, Michael Jansen, Lim Eng Hwee, Yumiko Noda, Dorjee Sun, Dr Wei Yang and Stephen Yarwood, for attending all three Symposiums since we started two years ago in 2014.
3. At the same time, I would also like to warmly welcome the 34 new Young Leaders joining us in Singapore for the first time. Some of you joined us in New York but this is your first visit to Singapore for this forum.
4. We have 55 Young Leaders from 29 cities all over the world represented here today - ranging from cities which have been around for centuries, and newer ones which have sprung up in the last few decades. This exciting and eclectic mix of cities in varying stages of development, geography and culture provides us with an exciting base for dynamic dialogue.

WCS Young Leaders as the “Google of Cities”

5. The Young Leaders network was launched in 2014 to establish a platform for the best and brightest urban leaders under the age of 45 to exchange innovative ideas and to forge new partnerships. This Symposium brings our Young Leaders together to share, to discuss and to understand the varied issues and challenges faced by our cities in an open and constructive manner.

This is why we have kept the Symposium design broad so that there is room to accommodate the voices of Young Leaders of all profiles and backgrounds in the urban space. We have Young Leaders in Government, in the private sector and in the people sector, all here in this room.

6. Some of you who attended in 2014 suggested that we profile this initiative as a form of a “Google of cities”, offering advice and networking opportunities for members to enhance the liveability of our cities. I personally found this a very apt idea and I hope that this network can indeed shape up to be the “Google of cities” for people to turn to in their search for ideas and solutions to the many urban issues and challenges they have to deal with.

Giving a Voice to Young Urban Leaders

7. Our mandate as a professional network and thought leadership platform is to also help to profile you and to amplify your work within our community of practitioners and thought leaders.
8. For this reason, we have aligned the Symposium closely with the agenda of the Mayors Forum and we will make sure the Mayors hear from all of us here in this room, in the form of a Young Leader interjection. It will be challenging, of course, to summarise the richness of our discussions later in five minutes, but I am sure Gabe Klein, who has kindly agreed to represent all of us, will be able to succinctly present the Symposium’s output to the Mayors Forum this year.
9. As part of our effort to create access to leaders and eminent thinkers, we are very honoured to have with us the Chairman of Nestlé, Mr Peter Brabeck–Letmathe join us today at this Symposium. Please take the opportunity to engage with Peter and tap on his vast experience and observations from running one of the world’s most diverse and global corporations.

Young Leaders in Action

10. So here we are today, for the 3rd edition and we are beginning to see some outcomes from this network. The 1st phase of this nascent network would have ended as the three years come to a close for the first batch of our Young Leaders who joined us in 2014. And it is my hope that the links to this network remain strong as they form a Young Leader alumnus network, and mentor some of the younger members from here.

11. I look forward to hearing about Hazem and Stephen's collaboration with the Governor of Yanbu (Saudi Arabia) in the development of their administration's strategic plan after they met at this platform. I understand the conversation began when they both attended the Symposium last year in New York, and I am encouraged for this network to have - even if in a very small way - played a role in getting them started. There will be an open Mic segment in the programme later today and hopefully more of you will plant the seeds for collaboration and spark the spread of new ideas.

12. I think we also have some interesting interactive activities lined up. Dorjee Sun, CEO of Carbon Conservation will be telling you more about his proposal for a WCS 2016 Steps Challenge during the session later. We are happy to support Dorjee Sun by adapting Singapore's Health Promotion Board's National Steps Challenge. I will let Dorjee tell you more about it himself. So please lend Dorjee Sun your fullest support.

Conclusion

13. Last year, we met in New York City and next year, the Symposium will head to another Lee Kuan Yew Laureate City, Suzhou, China. Being a global network, it can be challenging for all of us to keep in touch, but I do hope you will leverage your friendships forged here, and stay connected whenever you pass through each other's cities, and especially through Singapore. Keep us all posted on the interesting projects that you are involved in. Wherever the

network avails itself, I hope you can link up with other like-minded Young Leaders, mayors, Government leaders, and private sector champions.

14. To grow the network in your respective regions, we welcome you to nominate other Young Leaders like yourselves to join us. As I've said earlier, if you are passing through Singapore and need help with local connections, do shout out and let us know. We are also happy to organise Public Lectures around your areas of expertise and interest, as we did with Luis Bettencourt who spoke about "The City, Past Present and Future" and Gabe Klein who spoke about "Bridging the Public Private Divide to Create Great Cities".

15. So without much further ado, I will hand you back to our Moderator Nicholas. And I look forward to a very exciting, engaging and stimulating session this morning.

16. Thank You.