

**SPEECH BY MR SAM TAN, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE  
ARTS, AT THE BUSINESS OF HERITAGE CONFERENCE 2010,  
ON THURSDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2010, 9.30AM, AT THE  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE, GALLERY THEATRE**

Professor Tommy Koh, Chairman of the National Heritage Board

Mr Michael Koh, Chief Executive Officer of the National Heritage Board

Mr Philip M. Nowlen, Executive Director of The Getty Leadership Institute

Mr Simon Cronshaw, Co-Founder and Managing Partner of CultureLabel.com

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to join you this morning at the third annual Business of Heritage Conference.

2 Following the global financial crisis in July 2007, the resulting slowdown in the economy from 2008 to 2009 affected all sectors, including the arts and cultural sector. In a report published by the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) in 2009, an overwhelming majority of respondents

expected the global downturn to impact the arts but many remained unsure about the extent, nature and timing of the impact.

3 Although the world began recovering from the global financial crisis in early 2010, economic uncertainty still lingers and sustainability is a key issue for the heritage sector and heritage businesses in Singapore. Today's conference is therefore timely as museums and heritage galleries face challenges ensuring that their business models remain viable. The line-up of speakers and panelists at today's conference will address the key issue of sustainable revenue streams for museums and heritage businesses.

### **Developing Heritage Capabilities**

4 The IFACCA report also mentioned that most government agencies have been implementing initiatives that focus on providing information resources, advice and expertise to arts and heritage organisations. I am pleased to announce that NHB will be going beyond these areas of assistance by helping to build up a core of

museum professionals required to successfully operate Singapore's public and private museums.

5 The Museum Manpower Capability Survey conducted by NHB in July 2010 sought to identify the training and development needs of the museum sector. Based on the findings of the survey, NHB is embarking on a concerted effort to upgrade skills and create thought leadership for public and private museums in the Museum Roundtable.

6 In particular, NHB will be launching its inaugural Museum Masterclass series tomorrow. Under the pillar of thought leadership, NHB will focus on building up research and scholarship on museology as well as the arts, culture and heritage of Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia

### **Seeding and Sustaining Heritage Enterprises**

7 In addition to manpower capability development, the NHB has also actively supported the heritage industry through its Heritage

Industry Incentive Programme, better known by its acronym, HI<sup>2</sup>P. Since its inception, HI<sup>2</sup>P has supported a total of 51 successful museum products and heritage ventures.

8 During its pilot phase in 2007, HI<sup>2</sup>P supported nine projects by providing funding of S\$500,000. Over the past year, the number of HI<sup>2</sup>P projects supported has increased almost four-fold with the successful launch of 32 more projects, and a total business spending of close to S\$6 million. I invite you to step into the Heritage Mall to view some of these innovative HI<sup>2</sup>P funded projects.

9 Among the new heritage projects supported by HI<sup>2</sup>P is the setting-up of two new private galleries. The Heritage Wedding Gallery is dedicated to showcasing Chinese wedding rituals. The newly opened Scout Discovery Centre by the Singapore Scout Association features the history and development of scouting in Singapore. HI<sup>2</sup>P also funded acclaimed local filmmaker Royston Tan's newest documentary of old Singapore titled *Old Places*, which was recently shown on MediaCorp's okto channel. The scenes of old barber shops

and traditional bakeries would have brought back many fond memories for many viewers.

10 Other HI<sup>2</sup>P projects currently in the pipeline include a book dedicated to “chettians” who played a significant role in Singapore’s early banking and money-lending businesses from the 1820s to the 1940s, as well as an iPhone application titled *Singapore Heritage Walks* which features a series of heritage trails covering cultural hotspots Boat Quay, Chinatown, Kampong Glam and Little India.

### **Recognising Heritage Excellence**

11 It is also important for us to acknowledge the achievements of Singapore’s vibrant and diverse museums and heritage galleries. Over the years, these museums and galleries have painstakingly built up their curatorial, programming, conservation and outreach capabilities.

12 In fact, despite the economic downturn last year, Singapore museums have done very well by achieving yet another year of

record-breaking visitorship. Close to 7 million people visited both public and private museums in FY2009. This would not have been possible without engaging exhibitions, public-friendly programming, sound curatorial direction and good marketing strategies.

13 NHB's introduction of the first-ever Museum Roundtable Awards for 2011 is therefore most timely with Singapore now being home to 53 public and private museums. The inaugural Museum Roundtable Awards will recognise excellence in the museum sector, celebrate museum best practices and innovation, and enhance the local and international profile of museums under the Museum Roundtable. I look forward to the nominations from the public and private sector museums in the four award categories of "Best Exhibition", "Best Education and Outreach Programme", "Best Promotion and Marketing" as well as "Best Overall Experience".

## **Conclusion**

14 Beyond capability development, enterprise building and recognition of industry excellence, a vibrant and sustainable heritage

sector can only come about if there is a constant influx of new innovative ideas and the establishment of partnerships amongst heritage players in the public and private sectors. It is therefore through gatherings such as today's conference that ideas are shared, and partnerships formed through networking and collaborations. By building on one another's ideas and establishing collaborative partnerships, we can all work together towards greater resilience and long-term sustainability for the heritage sector.

15 Let me therefore conclude by encouraging all of you to take this opportunity to participate in the conference's discussions, and network with like-minded heritage entrepreneurs, museum professionals and thought leaders to exchange ideas and form new partnerships. On this note, I now declare the Business of Heritage Conference open. Thank you.