

**Speech by Mr Kwek Leng Joo President of Singapore Compact for CSR
Opening Ceremony of the 4th International Singapore Compact CSR Summit,
27 Sept 2012, Raffles City Convention Centre**

Guest of Honour, Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, Acting Minister for Manpower & Senior Minister of State for National Development; Excellencies; Distinguished Guests and Speakers; Ladies and Gentlemen;

A very good morning to you!

On behalf of Singapore Compact, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all speakers, delegates, supporters, in particular to our friends from overseas and the ASEAN CSR Network, to the International Singapore Compact CSR Summit 2012.

We are all gathered here today because the concept of sustainability is close to our hearts. An almost "alien" concept 10, 20 years ago, Sustainability is finally taking centre stage globally today. "The future we want" was the title of the draft resolution at the Rio+20 Conference held in June this year. Similarly, many other international events, including this year's World Expo, have made sustainability a central theme. More and more people recognise and accept that we live in challenging times as many believe that the world is reaching a tipping point.

In a recent KPMG study 10 sustainability megatrends were identified. Amongst them were climate change, energy and fuel volatility and water scarcity. These will impact business and industry over the next 20 years and as a business community, we must make sure these issues are addressed and given priority. The bottom line isn't the only line to consider.

Sustainability is indeed a global business trend that is here to stay and a reality that businesses cannot afford to ignore. These global challenges require global solutions. It cannot be handled by any one group or one country or region alone. We do not have the option of not doing anything. Here in the audience today are delegates from a variety of sectors which augur well for collective effort involving various stakeholder groups. That will certainly help us make a difference.

Singapore's commitment can be seen in our efforts to promote the balance between urban development and environmental sustainability. In recent years, there are various Ministries and Agencies spearheading initiatives under various CSR disciplines within the ISO26000 framework.

For instance, on the environmental front, a dedicated agency namely the National Climate Change Secretariat under the Prime Minister's Office was set up in 2010 to coordinate Singapore's policies, plans and actions on climate change.

In the aspect of national development, the effective efforts by the Building and Construction Authority have raised the standard of green buildings and sustainable development in Singapore. These initiatives have helped reduce carbon footprint of the entire built environment. NParks, a champion of greening urban spaces, has announced recently its Landscape Industry Productivity Roadmap to help Singapore transform itself into a City in a Garden.

New policies have been put in place to reduce the amount of energy and water consumed and the amount of waste generated. The Energy Conservation Act, which was announced earlier this year, will be administered not only by the Ministry of

Environment and Water Resources, but also the Ministry of Transport (MOT) because it covers measures for the transport sector as well.

On the labour and human rights front, the Ministry of Manpower has been working with various agencies to ensure that best practices are in place to raise safety standards at work place and construction sites.

From the corporate governance perspective, Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) has just issued a revised Code which aims to promote among listed companies a high standard of corporate governance which is fundamental to good CSR practices. In June last year, SGX launched the guideline on sustainability reporting.

All these efforts are certainly shaping Singapore's future. My hope is for a cross discipline Agency to adopt CSR officially and have an oversight of a strategic and consolidated approach across all CSR disciplines. This will allow greater synergy and help drive the CSR agenda more effectively across all businesses and sectors.

With an umbrella body to spearhead efforts in planning and implementing national CSR policies with a more dedicated and strategic approach, businesses will be more encouraged to align their strategies and practices to national priorities. Globally, there is growing consensus amongst opinion leaders that businesses should embrace sustainability to face current economic, social and environmental challenges. Terms such as "ethical standards" and "sustainability" have become commonplace in management speak. Businesses ought to embrace CSR as a door to new growth opportunities and as an effective way to achieve a balanced triple bottom line and most importantly, long term sustainability.

Many countries have put CSR and Sustainability Reporting on their national agenda. The European Union for instance is encouraging each of its member countries to come up with national CSR policies. Singapore may be small but we are deemed a dynamic global city, currently ranked No. 3 in GDP per capita in the world. It is therefore timely for Singapore to establish our own set of national CSR policies based on our tripartite model of working together. I believe this will bring about a much higher level of responsible business practices and results will be more visible and significant. As a country, Singapore has been doing a fairly good job in sustainability so far but more can be done, and quicker given the fast changing environment.

At Singapore Compact, we are well aware that there is much work to be done to foster effective partnerships which aim to bring about a real change in mind-set that will contribute to the nation's sustainability effort. Looking ahead, we will strive to expand our outreach and encourage more private and public initiatives to assist organisations in their CSR journey.

Apart from engaging businesses, I believe the future lies in our youth - the leaders of tomorrow. Youth development is therefore a key priority I set for Singapore Compact when I assumed the President appointment in May this year.

This morning, we will be handing out the top three awards of the CDL-SC Young CSR Leaders Award. In its second year, the competition has been a great platform to educate and promote CSR amongst our students in the tertiary education institutions. What is especially encouraging is that the quality of entries this year has improved tremendously. I congratulate all young participants for their dedication and creative ideas in CSR.

Today, we will also witness the signing of an MOU between the National Youth Achievement Awards Council and Singapore Compact. This important partnership aims to form a core group of young leaders to champion CSR amongst the youth and at their work place. The NYAA gold award holder alumni will serve as role models to engage more youth to take up responsible business practices. This initiative will enable Singapore Compact to engage a larger number of youth in our efforts to promote CSR for a more sustainable future. All of us at Singapore Compact are excited with this milestone development and look forward to working with NYAA and its high achieving members to push the CSR agenda.

The Singapore Compact CSR Awards which was launched in 2009 is of equal importance. To these winning companies who are leading examples for others to follow, please accept my heartiest congratulations. I truly applaud them for their commitment and for placing CSR high on their corporate agenda.

This Summit will also launch a publication which is part of Singapore Compact's larger long-term efforts to build a good CSR knowledge repository. Titled "*Knowledge Sharing for Sustainability*", supported by Fuji Xerox Singapore, this publication features key takeaways of past Singapore Compact Lectures and Summits, as well as personal perspectives and anecdotes of CSR leaders.

The late Ray Anderson, Chairman of Interface and noted global Sustainability Champion had this to say, "The status quo is a very powerful opiate and when you have a system that seems to be working and producing profits by the conventional way of accounting for profits. It's very hard to make yourself change. But we all know that change is an inevitable part of business." Ultimately, getting CSR right is a journey not a destination and that destination will change with the changing needs and expectations of Society. We need to continue to "do well by doing good".

Last but not least, I would like to thank our Guest of Honour, Minister Tan Chuan-Jin for gracing the opening of the CSR Summit. We are honoured to have your support to Singapore Compact in our journey to promote CSR and Sustainability in Singapore, which will have a strong impact on the nation's development. I would also like to thank all who have contributed towards the success of this Summit in particular our sponsors and speakers.

Let me conclude by wishing all participants a fruitful conference and an enriching exchange of insights and knowledge.

Thank you.