

**SPEECH BY MRS. GRACE CHONG-TAN,
PRESIDENT, SPIRIT OF ENTERPRISE (SOE)
THE SPIRIT OF ENTERPRISE AWARDS 2015
MONDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2015, 7:00PM
MANDARIN ORCHARD SINGAPORE, GRAND MANDARIN BALLROOM**

Our Guest of Honour, Ms. Low Yen Ling, Parliament Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry

SOE Founder, Mr. Russell Miller

SOE Past Presidents

Honourees, Sponsors, Donors, Partners

My Fellow Board of Governors

Distinguished Guests

Ladies & Gentlemen

A very good evening to you.

Thank you for taking time off your busy schedule to be here today to attend the SOE Awards Dinner 2015.

Entrepreneurs are considered as the lifeblood of an economy. Their ideas and energy are the driving force behind the economic development and growth of a country. That is why each year, the Spirit of Enterprise (SOE) recognizes home-grown entrepreneurs who have distinguished themselves for their contributions to the spirit of Singaporean entrepreneurialism.

As a non-profit organisation, SOE Board of Governors operate on a volunteer basis with a strong belief of giving back to the society. This is why, together with our partners, we commit

ourselves to the promotion of entrepreneurship to the future generation by providing the practical foundations to our aspiring young entrepreneurs with its signature programmes, namely the Student Entrepreneur Programme (SEP) and Student Interviewer Programme (SIP).

One of the appeals of the SEP is the 'Entrepreneur Talk' wherein the students get to learn from our SOE Honourees as they share the experiences and impart valuable lessons to the youths. Through this, we hope the future generation could perceive entrepreneurs as success models for creativity and inspiration; that they are people who started out yesterday, preserved today and set the scene for tomorrow.

Another feat that SOE achieved this year is the launching of the SOE-Credit Suisse Entrepreneurs Forum which acted as a platform for speakers to impart knowledge and insights on mergers and acquisitions, and market internationalisation. We would like to thank our SOE Alumni and Partners for their interest and participation in the forums held this year; while striving to organise more forums with topics close to the hearts of inspiring entrepreneurs.

We envision the youth to look upon the journey of entrepreneurship as a viable career option. We want them to appreciate the fact that being an entrepreneur is no longer a road less travelled and a challenge that most shy away from. SOE's Student Interviewer Programme (SIP) allows tertiary students to conduct a one-to-one interview session with successful entrepreneurs. It is our wish that this mentorship will not just demonstrate an understanding of the elements of business, but more importantly, they aim to cultivate passion, resilience, innovation and leadership amongst them; in the pursuit of their dream of owning a business venture.

New companies are usually formed because entrepreneurs believe that they can bring something new or better to the market, be it a product or a service. And when they become successful, they grow into SMEs or sometimes beyond. As they say, keeping a business sustainable is like riding a bike at high speed while juggling eight burning torches. From

production to financing, from accounting to labour regulations – the challenges are just endless but are worth the effort.

Tonight, SOE brings together 35 of Singapore's foremost business achievers as we recognize their strengths, dynamism and resilience by taking the lead in founding and operating sustainable, successful enterprises. The Spirit of Enterprise Award is a testament of their successful journey as an entrepreneur and the societal impact that they made. We, as your fellow alumni, recognise your courage, struggles, joy and fulfilment in your brave journey. A round of applause to our 35 outstanding Honourees for 2015, please.

We are also excited on the privilege to commend an inspiring SOE alumni for his winning vision, determination and innovative mind-set that set the pinnacle in inspirations for other fellow entrepreneurs. With this, I would like to congratulate this year's SOE-Nexia TS Entrepreneur of the Year Awardee, Mr. Mohamed Ismail Gafoor, Chief Executive Officer of P&N Holdings / Propnex Realty.

For all the community outreach initiatives that SOE implement, we are very blessed to have the unwavering funding support from our generous group of partners, sponsors and donors.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the following:

- Main Partner, Nexia TS Public Accounting Corporation - For supporting the SOE-Nexia TS Entrepreneur of the Year Award
- Education Partner, Charles & Keith (Singapore) - For their contribution to the Charles & Keith-Best Student Interviewer Award
- Strategic Partner, Credit Suisse AG - For their contribution to the SOE-Credit Suisse Entrepreneur Forums
- Scholarship/Bursary Partner, Mr. Michael Sengol
- SOE Awards Event Partner, Pernod Ricard Singapore
- SOE Official Partners: Aequitas Law LLP, Dian Xiao Er, Dyna-Mac Holdings, Emerio Globesoft, Goh Joo Hin, Home-Fix D.I.Y., Lee Foundation, Marunda Utama Engineering, Pestbusters, Smile Inc. ® Dental Surgeons, and Verztec Consulting.

Not forgetting our supporting government agencies - IE Singapore, SPRING Singapore, and Global Entrepreneur Week Organiser, for lending support to SOE Award throughout the years.

I will also like to extend my personal appreciation to our Guest-of- Honour, Ms. Low Yen Ling, Parliament Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry for gracing this year Awards Dinner.

My sincerest gratitude and appreciation to the generous men and women behind SOE. May I please request our SOE Board of Governors to please stand, thank you for your tireless contribution and playing your part in dedicating your resources, time and effort to ensure that SOE stays true to its causes.

I would also like to take this opportunity to give special commendation to SOE Award Chairman, Mr. Sa'at Ismail from SiliconPlus Communications. Sa'at has contributed generously with his time, expertise and resources to help SOE in its marketing communications needs at all SOE major events. A big round of applause for Sa'at and his dedicated team, please.

For all the honourees, continue your entrepreneurial journey, despite the challenges. You are all winners of success, for coming so far as Singapore's home-grown business achievers.

Tonight, let us celebrate.

Cheers.

Thank you.