Mr David Campbell,
Acting British High Commissioner to Singapore

Delegates and Researchers

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning, and to our overseas guests, welcome to Singapore. I am very pleased to join you today for the launch of the Singapore-UK Microelectronics & Embedded Systems workshop.

2. This workshop provides a useful platform for meaningful exchanges in science and technology, bringing together industry and academia from the UK and Singapore in order to spur the exchange of ideas and spark collaboration. I would like to commend the organizers, the British High Commission, Nanyang Technological University, the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) and The Institution of Engineering and Technology for their effort in organising this workshop. It is platforms like this that promote the kind of interaction and collaboration that Singapore needs in order to develop its R&D sector.

Growing Research and Development in Singapore
3. Research and development is critical in order for Singapore to anchor, attract and create high-value, knowledge-intensive industries, and is a cornerstone of Singapore’s strategy for developing into a knowledge-based economy. The Singapore Government has thus committed a total of S$13.55 billion from 2006 to 2010 to be invested in R&D to drive Singapore’s transformation into an R&D- and innovation-driven economy. Out of this, $7.5 billion from the Ministry of Trade and Industry will be used by A*STAR and the Economic Development Board to support mission-oriented R&D, $5 billion from the National Research Foundation to fund long-term research and new knowledge-intensive sectors, and $1.05 billion from MOE to support investigator-led and academic research in the setting up of research centers of excellence (RCEs).

4. The RCEs set up in our Autonomous Universities (AUs) are one of MOE’s major initiatives. MOE will be co-funding a few of these world-class research centres with NRF. The vision for RCEs is to conduct world-class investigator-led research with a global impact. I am confident that in years to come, the RCEs will set up a virtuous cycle of being able to attract top academic research talent, facilitate knowledge transfer to our AUs when they teach as joint-faculty in our universities, and attract the best graduate students to undertake research as we continue building up a critical mass of indigenous research talent.

5. However, such government initiatives to boost research require the strong support of both the industry and research community to be truly successful. Strong linkages with industry can spotlight new applications and fresh sources of funding. Strong links to the broader research community encourage multidisciplinary research and rich collaboration that may result in breakthrough ideas and unintended discoveries. I am therefore heartened to see that today’s MES2007 brings together industry and research academia, and hope that it will be a platform for much fruitful discussion.
6. In fact, initiatives such as this workshop are in line with the Government’s efforts in strengthening the nexus between R&D and business as well as to develop Singapore’s innovation capacities in downstream, problem-solving research. Our Institutions of Higher Learning have already put in place several of such partnerships. For example, our polytechnics link up with industry to develop their R&D competencies, such as Temasek Polytechnic’s MOU with Philips Electronics to collaborate on the development of healthcare-related products. In addition, our polytechnics are also setting up Centres of Innovation to serve as one-stop technology centres to assist local companies in developing commercially-viable technologies and products to sharpen their competitive edge. Such initiatives play an important part in driving the development of new products, processes and applications.

7. It is also vital that our universities maintain strong links with the industry to ensure that our research does not remain within the confines of the universities, but will result in products that will benefit society. In this regard, I am happy to note that both NTU and NUS have established industry links through collaborations on programmes and projects. For example, NUS’ collaborations with companies such as Hyflux and General Electric will facilitate the translation of basic and applied research into commercial application.

**Conclusion**

8. This workshop has attracted the attendance of many eminent UK and Singapore researchers and industry leaders. This is a good opportunity for academia and industry representatives from Singapore and the region to forge partnerships and joint ventures and to develop networking groups and collaborations with their peers in the UK. In closing, I hope that that this workshop will help catalyse more strategic collaborations between universities,
research institutes and industry players, and contribute towards the development of new intellectual property and new technologies in the near future.

9. On this note, I wish the inaugural Singapore-UK Microelectronics & Embedded Systems workshop every success, and wish all of you a fruitful time of sharing and learning.

Thank you