Opening Remarks by Mr Inderjit Singh, Member of NTU Board of Trustees, Member of Parliament for Ang Mo Kio Group Representation Committee and Guest-of-Honour at the NTU Career Fair 2010 Opening Ceremony, Wednesday, 27 January 2010, 10.10 a.m. at The Quad, Nanyang Technological University

Good Morning

Prof Er Meng Hwa, Senior Associate Provost, NTU

Mr Loh Pui Wah, Director, Career & Attachment Office, NTU

Participating Employers, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to be here this morning to join you at the Opening Ceremony of NTU Career Fair 2010.
Amidst the uncertainty of a full recovery of Singapore’s economy, I am pleased to see that there are 111 employers participating in the NTU Career Fair 2010. This is by far the largest job fair in NTU to date.

Out of the 111 employers participating in the NTU Career Fair 2010, I was told that that close to one third of the participating organisations are public agencies and the rest are private companies. This is a marked difference to the Career Fairs in 2008 or earlier, when the Fairs were dominated by the private sector. We are seeing a steady increase in number of public agencies in the fair starting from 14% in 2008 to to 31.5% this year. This is probably due to two reasons. First the government in response to the economic crisis and especially to the potential job losses as a result decided to hire ahead of schedule some of the headcount needed for future years. Second, the public agencies have been attracted to the diverse disciplines of graduates that are being produced by NTU. Besides graduates from Engineering, Accountancy and Business, NTU has over the last few years also produced graduates with degrees in the Sciences, Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. Indeed, NTU today is a comprehensive university offering a broad selection of degree programmes covering science and technology, business and the arts, entrepreneurial and leadership skills to prepare students for the global working world. This is a significant development as the public agencies
probably relied on the other local universities for most of their hiring in the
past. So we are also very happy that NTU is a choice university for public
agencies.

The university has always thrived on its strong partnership with the
industry and we appreciate the strong support from government agencies and
private companies for attachment and graduate recruitment. In responding to
the needs of the industry partners, NTU, through its Career & Attachment
Office (CAO), is constantly exploring new ideas to support its partners to make
campus recruitment a breeze for employers.

In the recent months, CAO has introduced two new initiatives to further
enhance campus recruitment for employers and students.

The first initiative is the NTU Talent Site. NTU Talent Site is a platform
created to facilitate employers to engage and interact with Gen Y graduating
students, on their turf, using web technology. Employers can make use of this
platform to build up their NTU talent pool and make recruitment more
effective. While many employers in the US have taken to Facebook for their
recruitment, companies in Singapore continue to adopt a cautious approach
and many are yet not ready to embark on social media platforms.
I consider myself slow in engaging the new social media platforms and in engaging the Gen Y population. But I myself finally have created a Facebook account to engage my residents who are savvy using these new media platforms. Today, whether we like it or not, these new media are becoming increasingly important means of communicating with the younger generation.

NTU hopes that the Talent Site, using the social media concept would bridge this gap and allow employers to engage and interact with NTU graduating students online. On the Talent Site, graduating students are able to create their profiles, publish their resume and upload video clips of themselves making an “elevator pitch”. They could also become “fans” of the employers of their choice. The employers, on their part, can profile themselves to graduating students by sharing with them the companies’ latest job openings, their organizational culture and their corporate videos and presentations. They could also send messages to their “fans” and invite them to corporate events and functions or update them on recruitment information and new developments. The Talent Site will be officially launched today and I encourage employers to explore this exciting new platform to interact with our tech-savvy students.

The second initiative is NTU Talent Quest. This is a career event for employers to recruit their much needed talents early in campus, before
students sit for their final examinations in May. 1,300 students applied for the positions available at participating companies in the first two weeks of January 2010. Those who have been shortlisted are scheduled to go for interviews on campus from 1-3 March 2010. Successful students will be offered jobs thereafter. This event makes use of the Talent Site platform to allow employers to profile themselves, post jobs available, receive applications and scheduled interviews online, saving employers much time and resources. This first event has attracted some 87 participating employers offering diverse job opportunities to the graduating class of 2010. It will be especially beneficial to those employers that recruit a small number of fresh graduates and that may not have the resources to be physically present in campus recruitment events.

For the benefit of NTU students, CAO has also set up an Overseas Attachment Fund to give financially needy students the opportunity to participate in overseas attachments. The Fund will pay for students’ airfare or defray the cost of living overseas especially in cases when the students do not receive stipends or funding from the overseas organisations. Employers sponsoring career events would be contributing to this fund. Their contribution would also be matched by government funds. So we should applaud the sponsors of NTU Career Fair for supporting this worthy cause.
I trust that you would find the two new initiatives – Talent Site and Talent Quest – useful in your effort to recruit NTU graduates. I would also like to urge you to contribute to the Overseas Attachment Fund to support a worthy endeavour. Finally, I encourage you to continue to strengthen the linkages with the university by exploring new areas of collaboration, beyond attachment and graduate recruitment, such as research and innovation projects.

Thank you for being a valuable partner in NTU Career Fair 2010. I wish you all a pleasant and fruitful time today and tomorrow.

Thank you.