



Ministry of Communications
and Information

An Engaged and Connected Singapore

**Opening Remarks by Minister Josephine Teo
At Graduation Ceremony and Launch of New Initiatives for 'Upskill 2022'
14 June 2022**

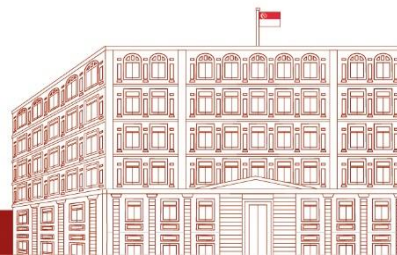
Meta Vice President of Public Policy APAC, Simon Milner

Singapore Managing Director, Meta, Damian Kim,

Meta Head of Public Policy, Singapore & ASEAN, Clara Koh,

SGTech Director of Government Affairs, Raj Singh,

1. Good afternoon. Thank you to our partners for working on this programme and being such great partners with the Government in human capital development.
2. I wanted to share about a recent experience I had at the World Economic Forum in Davos. I was on a panel titled "Creating a Global Skills Framework", which was built upon a global movement that saw human capital development as going through major shifts, and also noticing that in Singapore, from maybe about 10 to 15 years ago, we have started to emphasise a lot more on continuing education and training, and in particular how we can empower people to create better futures for themselves through upskilling and reskilling.
3. When we came back to Singapore, we hosted an international conference, Asia Tech x Singapore, and many of my counterparts as well as leaders from academia, businesses and industry gathered in Singapore. Again, this topic on digital skills came up. It really came about because Government and business leaders around the world appreciate the need to reskill and upskill their workers, to be ready for the digital age.
4. A future-ready workforce helps a nation seize growth opportunities, benefitting individuals and society. One area of growth is digital. In Southeast Asia, the digital economy is expected to more than double in size between end-2021 and 2025, according to a report by Google, Bain, and Temasek. Without the right skills sets, some workers will lose their relevance and find themselves in a very difficult position. With the right skills sets, those very same workers could thrive and bring a whole new lease of life to their careers, and invigorate their family circumstances and uplift the community that they are a part of.
5. This is why the Singapore Government has been working closely with our partners across academia and industry, not only to sustain and grow our pipeline talents that that could be deployed to the tech workforce, but also, importantly, to ensure that their skills are industry-relevant.
6. Take for example the TechSkills Accelerator, or TeSA. Since its launch in 2016, TeSA has trained more than 160,000 ICT and non-ICT professionals in new skills and domain knowledge in demand, such as the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, and product development, and now, even in areas such as cloud computing and cybersecurity. Through the Women in Tech Initiative, we have reached out and helped about 120,000 women to benefit from coaching, networking, and mentoring opportunities in tech, often with keen industry support and participation.



7. These talent development initiatives are complemented by programmes that are organised, led and implemented by the companies themselves. Upskill 2022 is a very good example of how one company, Meta, in this case, has worked with Government agencies – in this case, IMDA, ESG, and DISG – as well as trade associations like SGTech, to curate programmes that prepare individuals and SMEs for a digital future. Since its launch just over a year ago, more than 3,600 individuals and 300 SMEs have benefited.
8. I don't think I can over-emphasise how important it is to get the companies' involvement. The companies' involvement makes a huge difference because the content that they cover is always going to be so much more current and relevant to the immediate needs, and when the participants know that the content is current and sought after by prospective employers, the motivation is certainly going to be a lot stronger.
9. I am pleased that over a hundred of you have joined us in-person today at the graduation ceremony. Congratulations!
10. I met with a few of you - Jocelyn, Aiyah and Danish. Danish was a Computer Science major at NUS. Danish has recently graduated, but he did not need to look for a job because since Day One, he has been running his own business enterprise, and with the skills he has acquired from the programme, he was able to apply it immediately. I was also cheered that one of his company's projects is this year's Chingay50 social media campaign.
11. I also met up with Aisyah, who studied Communications and Media Management. She too recently graduated from Upskill. She was interning when she was attending the programme. The knowledge that she gained through this programme helped her to secure employment, her first job after graduation. Well done to you both! Both Danish and Aisyah show how digital skills can benefit anyone regardless of background, and this is why we intend to do more to strengthen and expand on our existing efforts, especially as we want to grow the talent pool that businesses can draw on in order to help Singapore's digital future.
12. In March this year, we launched the TeSA for ITEs and Polytechnics Alliance, or TIP Alliance. Through this Alliance, we will provide more internship, apprenticeship, and training opportunities to ITE and polytechnic students, who make up more than half the graduates from tech-courses each year. I look forward to more companies joining this meaningful effort.
13. I also welcome Meta's suite of new initiatives under Upskill, that will reach out to an even wider range of talents. These have to do with Augmented Reality (AR), and some scholarship programmes for students who come from non-STEM backgrounds.
14. Companies like Meta play an important role not only in supporting talent development initiatives, but also in working with stakeholders on issues like enhancing online safety.
15. On that note, thank you all once again for being here. I look forward to us having more opportunities to interact. Thank you.

