

Speech by Mr Tan Kiat How, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information, and Patron, AiSP, at the AiSP Youth Day Celebrations on 02 Jul 2023

AiSP Vice President Sherin Lee

Industry partners

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1. Good afternoon and thank you for having me here today to celebrate Youth Day with all of you.

2. This is the second Youth Symposium that AiSP has organised as part of the Youth Day Celebrations. The theme for this year's symposium, "The Critical Role of the Next Generation in Shaping the Future of Cybersecurity and Technology," and is particularly relevant as the digital landscape is rapidly evolving. The world we live in today is driven by constant technological advancements, and it is the youth who possess the power to harness the full potential of these innovations.

3. In this interconnected era, where the boundaries between physical and digital realms blur, we must acknowledge and celebrate the unique perspectives, skills, and contributions that young individuals bring to the table. The next generation has grown up immersed in technology, navigating the

digital world with ease. They are the digital natives, who possess an innate understanding of the possibilities and challenges that lie ahead.

Job opportunities for our Youths

5. I understand that many of us are deeply concerned about the recent tech layoffs. As a major tech hub, Singapore too has been impacted. However, we have fared much better than many parts of the world. Southeast Asia continues to be an important market for tech companies. These firms have long-term plans to scale up their presence here. Singapore has done well to capture this growth, anchoring these companies and their higher value tech roles development and corporate functions here in Singapore. These roles are often considered core to the companies' businesses and are more resilient to broad-based headcount rationalisation. For example, the average rate of re-entry into employment of retrenched residents for the I&C sector was higher than in other sectors. 7 in 10 of retrenched locals in the I&C sector were able to find another job within six months.

6. It is important that we continue to invest in our people and grow a pipeline of local talent.

On this front, the TechSkills Accelerator for ITE and Polytechnics Alliance ("TIP Alliance") that was launched in September last year is aimed at creating pathways for students in our institutes of higher learning by providing them

with the support to clinch technology-related jobs in the fast-growing digital economy. This includes internships and on-the-job training via apprenticeships to train students and graduates with in-demand skills.

7. To date, we have managed to bring on board 15 companies, including large local companies and global tech firms such as NCS, Singtel, UOB, Google and Oracle. The tech sector remains bright for Singapore's economy, with the I&C workforce growing by 42% from 2017 to 2022. I encourage the younger generation to seize opportunities in the growing digital economy and consider careers in the tech domain.

Youths play an important role in cybersecurity

10. The cybersecurity industry is still growing and requires a larger and more skilled cybersecurity workforce. Support from industry and community partners has been crucial in providing a platform to develop cybersecurity talent and provide training opportunities for everyone.

11. The Singapore Cyber Youth Programme, or SG Cyber Youth, was launched in 2019 to excite and guide youths towards a future career in cybersecurity through training bootcamps, competitions, learning journeys, and career mentoring sessions. It is led by the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (CSA) in collaboration with partners from the cybersecurity industry, academia, and associations such as AiSP. The SG Cyber Youth programme engages youth

from the secondary to tertiary levels. In partnership with CSA, AiSP aims to provide learning journey and volunteering opportunities for the community.

12. This year also marks the 5th anniversary of the launch of AiSP's Youth Programme. Happy Birthday to Everyone here. AiSP has reached out to more than 12,000 Youths through various activities such as learning journeys to corporate companies, bug bounty workshops, competitions, mentoring, career talks, school talks, knowledge sharing, overseas learning journeys in the region, and the Student Volunteer Recognition Programme (SVRP).

13. We welcome more partners to join us in this effort. Consider opening your doors for students, graduates, and professionals to gain valuable cybersecurity experience. Although this may require some investment on your part by the company, the long term benefits will be worth the effort.

14. All such contributions and the support rendered by organisations like AiSP, build the community spirit of the cybersecurity fraternity and play an important role to protect our cyberspace and creating opportunities for youths. Today's event is one good example of where all of you can find out more on the different job opportunities offered by the Government and private sector. I encourage all of you to speak to them to find out more on what they can offer and how you can be more involved as a student and even after you graduate.

Conclusion

19. To the youths amongst the audience, I am confident that our efforts will enable Singaporeans like you to thrive in a digital future and take Singapore forward. I would encourage you to explore and consider taking up a career in this exciting and growing field of cybersecurity after you graduate and put your skills to the test and contribute to the local ecosystem.

20. On that note, I wish all of you a Happy Youth Day.