

**OPENING ADDRESS BY MINISTER CHAN CHUN SING
AT SKILLS FOR GOOD FESTIVAL
27 JULY 2024 AT PLAZA SINGAPURA (MAIN ATRIUM)**

Introduction

1. A very good afternoon to all of you. Thank you all for inviting me here to join you.
2. When I launched this year's SkillsFuture Festival a few weeks ago, I shared that SkillsFuture is a key pillar of our social compact. I believe that SkillsFuture will be as important as our housing, defence, healthcare, and education. Why? Because for us to stay competitive as individuals, as a country, we need to keep upgrading ourselves.
3. How long do you think the average person stays in a job today? Today, the average length of a person staying in the same company has shrunk. The average is about five years, but even if they stay five years in the same job, chances are that they are not doing the same task.
4. On average, every year, about 20% of our people will do something new, such as changing jobs, doing a new task, and so forth. This means

that every year, on average, the Government would need to upskill 500,000 Singaporeans out of about 2.5 million adult Singaporeans.

5. How does that number sound like? How many students does MOE have in our schools?

6. In our schools, we have about 500,000 students. But our mission in Singapore is not only to train 500,000 students in our school system, but to also reach out to another 500,000 adult learners and encourage them to learn something new, to keep themselves fresh, or acquire tangible skills required for the market. This is why SkillsFuture must be a key pillar of our social compact.

7. In many countries, they say that they benefit from trade. But only some benefit from trade, while others have to make adjustments. In Singapore, when we benefit from trade and globalisation, we want everyone to benefit. We want to help those who may have lost out, to adjust and acquire new skills, so that they too continue to earn a better living and have better jobs. We are committed to making sure that everyone shares the benefits of our economic growth, by giving everyone the opportunity to upskilling and staying competitive. Thus, we are here today to bring SkillsFuture to the next level.

CDCs and SSG

8. This event bears testimony to the longstanding partnership between the CDCs and SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG).

- a. The collaboration started as early as in 2017, when we launched the SkillsFuture Advice as a key skills outreach programme across the CDCs.

9. It is a win-win partnership that SSG taps into CDCs' local networks and understanding of our residents' needs. This ensures that SSG's initiatives, at the national level, are customised according to the respective needs of the divisions and districts, and in turn, CDCs are able to provide another channel to assist our residents.

10. To further leverage on the CDCs as a key bridge to help our people access our SkillsFuture support, we are now deepening the SkillsFuture@CDC partnership in a few ways.

Deepening SkillsFuture@CDC Partnership

11. First, the CDCs and their networks will better identify different segments of residents who need more skills support.

- a. This could include new caregivers who require caregiving courses or women looking to return to the workforce after family responsibilities. The CDCs have been working with partners to support such individuals undergoing major transitions in their lives.
- b. Earlier this year, I announced the SkillsFuture Level-Up Programme for Singaporeans aged 40 and above to support their substantive upskilling and reskilling, to help them catch a second wind in their careers.
- c. I am heartened to hear the CDCs are reaching out to mature residents and spreading the word about the \$4,000 SkillsFuture Credit top-up.

12. Second, the CDCs will deepen the content and currency of their jobs and skills fairs and workshops.

- a. The workshops will be better curated, focusing on specific sectors and relevant developments in technology and the economy. I am glad to hear of the keen interest by our residents, judging by the many sign-ups for GenAI workshop and green learning journeys.

- b. In their curation, CDCs are guided by residents' feedback and needs of our enterprises, especially those with good job prospects.
- c. Our CDCs are also working with the Lifelong Learning Institute so residents who need one-to-one skills and career advisory can access such services.
- d. Through SkillsFuture Advice, our aim is to help participants translate the knowledge and insights into action and take steps in upskilling.
- e. In 2024, 5,000 individuals went on to take up a course, with many using their SkillsFuture Credit, within six months of attending a SkillsFuture Advice workshop. This is good progress but we aim to do even more.

13. Third, CDCs will help us build collective actions and partnerships at the local level to drive the SkillsFuture movement.

- a. They have strong networks and partnerships with the grassroots organisations, self-help groups, social service organisations and many local enterprises.
- b. Through their networks, we want to connect our residents to the local enterprises as well.

14. With CDCs pulling together the various partners and networks, I am confident we will continue to strengthen our SkillsFuture movement.

Conclusion

15. Lastly, I would like to thank everyone here. Providing the SkillsFuture Credit (Mid-Career) top-up is one part of the Government's efforts. Curating the courses for our residents is another part of SSG, WSG and CDCs' efforts. But the most important part in this journey starts with the individual. Every one of us must take ownership and responsibility to seize the opportunities in front of us. I know many of us are busy working adults with family and financial commitments, asking the question "How can I find time to upskill and reskill myself ahead of time?". Well, there is no easy answer.

16. But let me ask you this: do you have a hobby and what makes it a hobby? If a hobby is something you do only when you have time, then you will never have a hobby. We are all busy people with commitments that we want to fulfil. If you replace the word "hobby" with "learning", it's the same spirit. Continuous learning must be in our DNA, so that we make time to learn regardless of where we are in life. The Government's

commitment is to find the resources to give everyone the opportunities to keep learning to stay relevant and competitive together.

17. On that note, I want to thank all the CDCs and the partners for helping us in this journey. Your greatest contribution to us is to go forth and help us to spread the message that all of us can learn, anytime, anywhere, across any life stage, as a nation. Thank you.