

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE
(FOREIGN AFFAIRS) DR BALAJI SADASIVAN AT THE
OPENING CEREMONY, 22 JUNE 2009, 9.00 AM, MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Singapore-World Bank Third Country Training Programme:

Third South-South Study Visit, 22 - 26 June 2009, Singapore

Mr Yaw Ansu
Sector Director, Human Development Africa Region
The World Bank

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. On behalf of the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I would like to welcome all of you to this Opening Ceremony for the Third South-South Study Visit for African policy-makers to be held from 22 - 26 June 2009 in Singapore. We welcome especially our 34 distinguished senior participants who are here with us from 6 countries in Africa - Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda and Tanzania.

2 Singapore is happy to collaborate with the World Bank to jointly organise this study visit on skills and knowledge development for economic growth, as part of our Singapore Cooperation Programme.

3 Singapore is a relatively young and small country with no natural resources or a natural hinterland. Our key resource is our people. We were fortunate to have friends who were willing to share their expertise with us during our early years of independence. Having gone through various stages of development ourselves, and as a responsible international citizen, we are now happy to share our knowledge, expertise and developmental experiences with our friends from around the world under the Singapore Cooperation Programme.

4 The Singapore Cooperation Programme, established in 1992 under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has provided training courses, workshops, seminars and study visits to over 61,000 government officials from 169 countries. We see the Singapore Cooperation Programme as a way to share our experience and expertise with our friends outside Singapore.

5 This study visit is one of the many that we have organised in collaboration with the World Bank, which has been one of our most valued development partners. Singapore started its collaboration with the World Bank in 1996 with a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed to provide joint technical assistance programmes to developing countries in various fields such as education, environment management, finance and banking, urban development, IT and hospital reform. To date, we have jointly trained more than 650 government officials from developing countries in Africa and the

Asia-Pacific in some 23 training programmes.

6 In 2006, Singapore and World Bank (Africa) concluded another Memorandum of Understanding on Third Country Training Programme specifically to provide joint technical assistance programmes to support development in Africa. This is the third in a series of study visits executed under the MOU.

7 The first study visit was held in 2006 for some 30 education sector policy makers from six countries - Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Madagascar and Mozambique. Its aim was to expose participants to the experience of East Asian countries in investing in human capital through the education system to support skills-based economic development. The programme comprised of a segment each in Singapore and Vietnam, and presentations by educators from Korea, Hong Kong and Thailand.

8 The second study visit, focused on the theme "Leaders in Education and Training for Sustained Growth in Africa (LETSGA), took place in 2008. A total of 51 senior government officials and 3 journalists from Ghana, Madagascar and Mozambique attended the programme. It is hoped that the three countries would subsequently develop and implement their own actionable plan on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development.

9 This third study visit, focusing on skills and knowledge development for economic growth, will add another dimension to the study series, showing how the formal education and training system is linked to the skills associated with a country's development strategy and the growth of industry and private enterprise. Singapore is glad to share with our friends from Africa our integrated approach to education and skills development. Underlying this approach is the basic philosophy that human capital development is the responsibility of the Whole of Government, as it is an important component of the entire eco-system of our national economy and development strategy.

10 It is our hope that our development experience can be of use to you, our friends in Africa, in your developmental journey. By adapting, where appropriate, some of the ideas and approaches to meet your country's needs, we hope we could help in contributing to the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals.

11 Singapore is heartened with the progress made in many parts of Africa, where good governance, stability, and capable leadership have made a difference. We believe that Africa has much potential to develop its vast human capital for economic and social development. Harvard/Oxford-educated economist Dambisi Moyo in her ground breaking bestseller 'Dead Aid' puts it starkly that "direct foreign aid to Africa had bred dependency and trapped nations in poverty". We in

Singapore have learnt that there is no alternative to achieving progress than through hard work, economic development and trade. Increasingly there is realisation too in Africa that aid alone is not the answer to Africa's challenges. Such development bodes well for Africa.

Distinguished senior participants,

12 I am sure that you will have a very substantive and interesting learning journey ahead of you in the study visit programme. Apart from the knowledge sharing sessions, you can look forward to many opportunities to engage senior Singapore public sector leaders on various issues relating to development, as well as industry and private sector professionals. You will also have the chance to visit various educational institutions and industries (e.g. Port of Singapore, petrochemical industry, oil rig manufacturing) to find out how skilled human capital is raised to meet the needs of these industries.

13 On a lighter note, I hope that you will also enjoy the social programmes that have been arranged for you and that you will find some time to experience a bit of Singapore's multicultural lifestyle and cuisine. You would have probably noticed on your arrival to Singapore, that the annual Great Singapore Sale is now on, and it is a great time to buy some merchandise for your friends and loved ones back home. We hope that you will find some good bargains and at the

same time contribute to our economy!

14 In conclusion, I wish to express our appreciation to our partner and co-sponsor, the World Bank for their foresight and effort in conceptualising and implementing this study visit with Singapore. I wish to also thank our local agencies, the International Enterprise Singapore, the Civil Service College, and my Ministry's Technical Cooperation Directorate, for their contributions and hard work in bringing this study visit to fruition. For our 34 distinguished senior participants from Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda and Tanzania, I wish you a pleasant, meaningful and memorable stay in Singapore!

Thank you.

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