# experience SINGAPORE



How Singapore is preparing its key industries for the next stage of evolution

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## ED'S NOTE



#### Dear readers,

Happy New Year! In a turn of a decade characterised by digital disruption and the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of building resilience in the face of change has never rung more true. In this first issue of 2021, we explore how countries can embrace innovation in this fast-changing world to prepare themselves, their industries and their citizens for tomorrow's challenges.

This issue's Focus story "Levelling Up" (pages 3 to 5) looks at how Singapore is encouraging innovation and taking steps to ensure that its legal, medical and education sectors are poised for growth. At the same time, while innovation may provide opportunities for everyone, the cross-border challenges they present must be tackled collaboratively. Our article "Taking On Tomorrow Together" (pages 10 and 11) shines a spotlight on the role of multilateralism in addressing challenges like unregulated cryptocurrency enabling money laundering and terrorism financing, and the proliferation of fake news and disinformation. It also highlights how global partnerships can allow countries to better harness new renewable energy solutions to advance the sustainability agenda.

While great ideas have been the driving forces of human advancement, the role of intellectual property (IP) is less well understood. Not only can IP create the conditions that spur innovation, good IP protections may in some instances uplift local communities, such as the case of Kampot Pepper in Cambodia. We speak to Mr Daren Tang, the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization — and the first Singaporean to head a United Nations agency — on the need to shift our perceptions of IP, and leverage it to drive enterprise growth, create jobs and spur development (pages 8 and 9).

Recognising that knowledge is a force for change — and undaunted by pandemic travel restrictions, our Reflections story highlights the Singapore Cooperation Programme's use of digital tools and online platforms to sustain the momentum of courses and fostered opportunities for the exchange of ideas (pages 6 and 7). More than ever, such learning and dialogue is crucial to fostering understanding, forging

peace and future-proofing ourselves in a world that often seems increasingly volatile, uncertain and complex. We invite you to join in the conversation that seeks to bring about a better tomorrow.

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Share with us your memories, photos and experiences in Singapore under the Singapore Cooperation Programme. Email us at mfa@mfa.sg

Theryl Thum

**Acting Director** Strategic Communications Directorate Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore



SCAN OR CODE TO READ MAGAZINE ONLINE

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### experience SINGAPORE

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Left to their own devices, most sectors will naturally evolve. Some may grow exponentially while others may whittle down due to external circumstances. But if the Singapore story is anything to go by, it is that careful planning will go a long way in helping sectors reach their maximum potential. Read on to find out how policymakers in Singapore use accelerators, partnerships and grants to supercharge the legal, medical and education industries' next stage of growth.

#### THE FUTURE OF LAW

This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Singapore's second Chief Justice Mr Yong Pung How's decision to abolish the traditional wigs worn by judges and lawyers in the courtroom. Also done away with were archaic salutations such as "My Lord" or "Your Lordship" for Supreme Court judges. These changes paved the way for the transformation of Singapore's

legal system and for the widespread adoption of technology to streamline court procedures.

Among the innovations adopted in the 1990s and 2000s were an electronic filing system for court documents and LawNet, an information and knowledge portal. Last October, Singapore's Ministry of Law embarked on an ambitious 10-year roadmap to build on existing initiatives and further promote technology adoption in Singapore's legal industry. Dubbed the Legal Industry Technology and Innovation Roadmap (TIR), it was launched by Second Minister for Law Mr Edwin Tong at TechLaw.Fest, an annual conference on law and technology.

Efforts to drive technology adoption in the legal industry extend beyond the corporate world — strides have also been made to ensure that graduates from Singapore's law schools are comfortable with technology. Law undergraduates from the National University of

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At the end of the day, whether you do negotiations as a transactional lawyer, or you do advocacy as a disputes lawyer, that communication is something that is not replaceable. The use of technology is to make them or the industry a lot more efficient, and to allow them to focus on really high-value work.

> Second Minister For Law Mr Edwin Tong



ATTENDEES
AT THE ANNUAL
TECHLAW.FEST,
WHICH BRINGS
TOGETHER GLOBAL
TECH AND LEGAL
CIRCLES FOR
CONVERSATIONS
ON FUTURE LAW.



## THE LEGAL INDUSTRY TIR BUILDS ON TWO INITIATIVES TO ENCOURAGE TECH ADOPTION IN THE SECTOR:

- Tech Start for Law, a one-year programme that provided S\$2.8 million of funding support for law firms to adopt baseline technology solutions. These solutions allowed lawyers to perform daily tasks such as contract reviewing and court filing more efficiently.
- Tech-celerate for Law was launched in 2019 and only recently concluded in January 2021. It provided over S\$3.5 million of funding support for baseline as well as advanced technology solutions.

Singapore have the option to enroll into a datarelated minor programme such as business analytics, computer science or information systems. The Singapore Management University has also launched the Bachelor of Science (Computing and Law) degree, which combines information technology (IT) and law.

Devised in consultation with industry partners and leaders, the hope is that these efforts to drive widespread technology adoption will increase productivity within the profession. Such initiatives will also strengthen Singapore's status as a thriving legal tech hub in Asia, and attract global law practices and legal tech firms to establish operations in the nation.

#### MEDICINE REIMAGINED

The rapid development of COVID-19 vaccines is testament to how far medical science has progressed over the past century. This, coupled with the emergence of hundreds of medical technology (medtech) firms around the world shows just how much more is possible. Medtech — known in some regions as health tech — is a fast-growing sector in the biomedical sciences industry that encompasses technologies that diagnose, treat and improve health conditions. Medtech has been a boon for the global economy, with estimates suggesting that it achieved S\$514 billion in sales globally in 2020.



#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Singapore is home to over
60 multinational medtech companies.
These offices undertake a range
of activities, from serving as
regional headquarters, to
manufacturing, as well as research
and development facilities.

SOURCE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD (SINGAPORE)

The Singapore Government first identified medtech as a sector for potential growth in the 2000s. Fast forward to today, and the research and development arms of more than 30 global medtech firms are located in Singapore. It is also home to a plethora of homegrown medtech start-ups that have been garnering international attention. The success of the sector relies largely on collaborations and open innovation. For instance, the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR) collaborates with the Consortia for Improving Medicine with Innovation and Technology (CIMIT), a non-profit consortium of Boston's leading academic and medical institutions. Through this collaboration, CIMIT identifies late-stage healthcare technology projects for Singapore to develop and adapt for commercialisation within Asia.

Private-public partnerships have also enabled the co-development of innovative medical technologies. For instance, GE Healthcare and A\*STAR announced in November 2020 that they had co-developed technological advancements in imaging diagnostics and patient monitoring. These advancements allow for quicker position

MEDTECH HUB, BUILT BY STATE INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPER JTC, SUPPORTS THE GROWTH OF THE
MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY IN SINGAPORE.



STUDENTS FROM CHUA CHU KANG SECONDARY
SCHOOL USING LEARNING DEVICES IN CLASS, PHOTO
TAKEN BEFORE COVID-19.



The growth of medtech will tackle prevalent challenges posed by:

Rising healthcare costs

Ageing populations

Increasing incidences of chronic diseases

SOURCE: AGENCY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH





Edtech is a maturing industry in Singapore that is exploding with opportunities. As learning moves beyond the classroom, edtech applications in Singapore will appeal to increasing segments of the community as they embrace lifelong learning.

Mr Shivanu Shukla, CEO and Co-Founder of Edtech firm Teamie

emission tomography (PET) scans and also assist healthcare providers in providing more accurate diagnoses. Commenting on the partnership, Dr Benjamin Seet, Executive Director of A\*STAR's Biomedical Research Council, said, "Digital technology will disrupt and transform healthcare. Our partnership with GE Healthcare is a clear demonstration of how open innovation can work to develop cutting-edge solutions that have already benefitted patients. This not only brings value to our partners, but provides tangible benefits for Singapore's research, innovation and enterprise, and healthcare systems."

#### LESSONS FOR TOMORROW

COVID-19 has thrust the future of education into the spotlight as it fundamentally altered the education landscape around the world — teachers and administrators suddenly had to make e-learning an everyday reality for their students. Not only did they have to develop ways to deliver engaging and quality lessons to students at home, they also had to ensure that school activities were carried out in a safe manner.

Fortunately, educational technology (edtech) firms in Singapore have been preparing for this scenario for years. They were the solution providers for the education sector when COVID-19 hit. Key to getting there is the conducive environment that Singapore provides edtech firms with. Most recently in 2019, seed capital firm Spaze Ventures launched EduSpaze, Singapore's first edtech accelerator. The Enterprise Singapore-backed accelerator provides up to \$\$500,000 to early-stage edtech start-ups,



to help them go to market. Nine start-ups were eventually picked for EduSpaze's inaugural cohort, and these were divided into four educational categories based on their target audience: Pre-K (pre-kindergarten), K-12 (kindergarten to grade 12), higher education and corporate learning.

While accelerators are useful for supporting and accelerating start-ups' business ventures, it is just as important to grow the industry's capabilities to adopt such solutions. Aside from Singapore's high technology adoption rates and longstanding emphasis on education that made it well-placed for the growth of the edtech industry, dedicated masterplans have been developed to focus on building up schools' capacity to use technology to enhance learning since 1997. These will continue to guide the use of technology in teaching and learning, and support new modes of education such as Blended Learning in the years to come.

STUDENTS FROM BEDOK SOUTH SECONDARY
SCHOOL USING LEARNING DEVICES IN CLASS, PHOTO
TAKEN BEFORE COVID-19.

Beyond preparing for the future, the Ministry of Education (MOE) also adapted quickly to changing circumstances as COVID-19 accelerated plans to future proof the education sector: for instance, how would students from low-income families cope without access to the internet, a laptop or a smartphone? MOE acted quickly to address these gaps. In June 2020, it brought forward a plan for all secondary school students (aged between 13 and 17) to own a personal learning device such as a laptop or tablet, seven years ahead of the original target. As COVID-19 continues to disrupt lives around the world, these digital learning initiatives and edtech solutions will become key to ensuring that students in Singapore continue to receive the quality education they deserve.

# LEARNING IN PLACE

#### Singapore-United States Third Country Training Programme: Workshop on Smart Cities

10 NOVEMBER - 4 DECEMBER 2020

Conducted under the auspices of the Singapore-United States Third Country Training Programme (TCTP), the Workshop on Smart Cities was developed with the ASEAN Smart Cities Framework in mind. Trainers from the Centre for Liveable Cities and US-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership shared about the role of technological, biophilic and nature-based solutions in developing smart, well-integrated and sustainable cities.











#### Economic Development Strategies: Preparing the Public Sector for the Future Economy

30 NOVEMBER - 4 DECEMBER 2020

This course discussed Singapore's strategies in preparing the public sector for the future economy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and changing global trends. Experts from the Ministry of Trade & Industry, Infocomm Media Development Authority and Ngee Ann Polytechnic shared about Singapore's Industry Transformation Maps, efforts in creating an ecosystem for a digital economy, and the evolution of Singapore's education system.



#### Innovations in Governance

9 - 12 NOVEMBER 2020

Conducted under the auspices of the SCP Training Award, this course saw the Civil Service College Singapore sharing Singapore's experience in driving transformation and promoting innovation in our public service, such that it remains adaptable to changing societal needs and expectations. The participants learnt about Singapore's Whole-of-Government approach, the use of foresight and planning tools, as well as technology in public service delivery. They then applied their learnings to develop an action plan to tackle scenarios in their own countries.

Online platforms and video conferencing tools have made it possible to sustain the momentum of exchange and cooperation, and ensure that we are still able to learn from each other.





## Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century X Initiative for ASEAN Integration: Workshop on Intellectual Property Rights

9 - 24 NOVEMBER 2020

Conducted under the joint framework of the Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century (JSPP21) and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), trainers from the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore and Japan Customs shared how Singapore and Japan protect intellectual property (IP) rights, promote respect for IP and prevent counterfeit trade. The participants, from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV), also shared good practices on IP policymaking and IP rights border protection that have been adopted in their home countries.



#### Integrated Cybersecurity Management and Systems

11 - 15 JANUARY 2021

With growing reliance on the internet-of-things, understanding cybersecurity and risk management is critical. This course conducted by Singapore Polytechnic exposed participants to best practices in enterprise risk management, incident response management and security operations centre. Participants also engaged in a hands-on simulated threat and incident tabletop exercise.

### Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP)'s new online platform – START

SCP has launched the SCP Training Administration Reporting Tool (START), a one-stop online portal where you can access information and submit applications for upcoming SCP courses. Henceforth, applications for SCP courses will have to be submitted via START, which is available at <a href="https://www.scp.gov.sg">https://www.scp.gov.sg</a>. Refer to the START user guides below for more information:

 Applicants and Applicants' Supervisors: https://go.gov.sg/start-quide

National Focal Points for Technical Assistance (NFPs): https://go.gov.sg/start-nfp



# REIMAGINING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

A bold new vision for an age-old law — that's what Singaporean Mr Daren Tang, the World Intellectual Property Organization's new Director General, has in mind.

The term "intellectual property" (IP) conjures up images of the copyright symbol, music piracy and the millions of patents that are in force around the world. But if the new Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has his way, we would have to fundamentally reimagine the way we view IP. "I hope the global community will shed its narrow perception of IP as being solely about legal issues such as trademarks and patents. It does encompass those things, but I think it offers so much more: IP is about how we can help innovators and ideators take their ideas and products to the market. It's about supporting the creators and artists around us," said

Mr Daren Tang, who assumed his role

This reimagining of IP is not new to Mr Tang. After all, he adopted a change in perspective himself. "I'll admit, IP was never my first love," he quipped. "Even as an international lawyer, I saw it purely as a legal issue." But his views started to evolve after he joined the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS), a statutory board which helps innovators use IP to take their ideas to market.

#### A BALANCING ACT

During his stint as IPOS' Chief Executive, Mr Tang came to understand IP's potential to be a force for development. He noted how brands with an overseas presence were able to spread their wings only because they were protected by trademark. "So indirectly, IP creates jobs, drives enterprise growth and spurs economic development," reflected Mr Tang, who is the first Singaporean to helm a United Nations (UN) agency. Mr Tang used the example of Cambodia's prized Kampot Pepper to illustrate his point. "In Cambodia, Kampot Pepper was registered as a geographical indication, like Champagne in France. This allowed it to be marketed as a premium product and has raised revenues for the community."

Maximising the potential of IP requires those who administer the IP regime to maintain a fine balancing act, or as Mr Tang puts it, being in the "Goldilocks" zone. "You can't be too overzealous with your

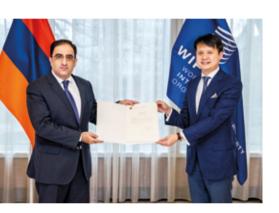


MR TANG TAKING THE OATH OF OFFICE IN OCTOBER 2020.



At first glance, IP may seem dry and unexciting. But when you see it in its broader context, when you see how it impacts our lives, it suddenly comes alive.

Mr Daren Tang, Director General, World Intellectual Property Organization



WIPO MAINTAINS STRONG TIES WITH ITS MEMBER STATES.

protections or you stifle competition. But if you're too lax with them, you won't encourage innovation and creativity," he shared, adding that there's no one-size-fitsall approach to finding this balance. "It really varies from country to country." A raised awareness of this has sparked brisk demand from countries for WIPO's assistance to help build a good IP ecosystem. In addition, there is also increasing demand for WIPO's services, which include the running of international filing systems and registries for patents, trademarks and designs. These help entrepreneurs and innovators move brands, technologies and ideas seamlessly across borders.

#### MORE THAN JUST IP

Through agreements and treaties, WIPO also helps set international rules for IP that can have important knock-on effects. Mr Tang cited the example of the Marrakesh Treaty, which WIPO adopted in 2013. "That



MR TANG OPENING THE THIRD SESSION OF A MEETING ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

was a great boost for visually-impaired communities as it allowed them to have greater access to copyrighted works in Braille and other formats accessible to them," said Mr Tang, who will helm WIPO for a six-year term.

The impact of WIPO can also be felt in the sustainability sphere, thanks to initiatives such as the WIPO Green. This online platform connects providers and seekers of environmentally-friendly technologies, which can catalyse green technology innovation and diffusion across borders. "These are just some ways that IP can take on a new meaning in people's minds." To achieve these, WIPO maintains strong ties with Member States and other stakeholders. Mr Tang calls these relationships the cornerstone of the agency's success and efforts. "In the coming years, we will deepen these relationships to identify and enhance WIPO's contributions in working with others to address issues like health, sustainability and climate change,"

Apart from legal frameworks and initiatives, more must be done to demystify IP and bring the IP message to the man in the street. "WIPO is embarking on programmes to help global communities realise IP's relevance to them. We want them to see IP as being a part of their daily lives and not something mysterious, foreboding or even intimidating. We will also identify ways to communicate the potential of IP to new audiences, ranging from start-ups and SMEs, to youths who want to bring these great ideas that they have to the world."

#### THE WORLD OF IP

Around **15 million patents** were in force globally in 2019. The highest numbers were in the:

- United States of America (3.1 million)
- China (2.7 million)
- Japan (2.1 million)

**South Korea** files the most patents per unit of GDP.

Close to seven out of 10 IP filings with WIPO now come from **Asia**, compared with four out of 10 at the start of the millennium.

WIPO employs 1,500 employees and has a biennial budget of S\$1.15 billion.



joining hands

# TAKING ON TOMORROW TOGETHER

Future-oriented innovations may provide opportunities for everyone, but the cross-border challenges they present must be tackled collaboratively.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of governments coming together to mount joint responses to global challenges. Beyond the critical role it plays in times of global pandemic, multilateralism is also a key tool for harnessing the benefits of rapid technological advancements while dealing with the many new challenges that arise.

#### **TOWARDS GREATER UNIFORMITY**

The rise of cryptocurrency — also known as virtual currency — is a sign of the times we live in. At the time of writing, there are a few thousand forms of cryptocurrency around the world. This is a staggering feat, given that the first known cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, only came into being in 2009, slightly more than a decade ago. Cryptocurrency continues to surge in popularity — during the first weekend of this year, Bitcoin saw its price surge past US\$30,000 for the first time ever.

The benefits of virtual currency are wide-ranging, from providing users with lower transaction fees to offering providers some insurance from fraud. But so are the new and inherent risks they carry, that have time and again, led to renewed calls for greater regulatory scrutiny of cryptocurrencies. This is especially as they increasingly become a crossborder conundrum, acting as enablers of money laundering and terrorism financing activities. "They need to be regulated, and service providers



need to carry out proper customer due diligence and monitoring of transactions," said Mr Ong Ye Kung, Singapore's Transport Minister and a board member of its central bank, the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS).

However, these regulations will mean little if they are enforced in jurisdictional silos. Despite being a small nation, Singapore plays an active role in shaping international standards that help to combat money laundering and terrorism financing through forums such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Singapore joined the organisation in 1992 and regularly enhances its regulatory frameworks to align with the international standards set out by the FATF.

Singapore's Parliament also recently passed the Payment Services (Amendment) Bill in January. The amendment has expanded regulation to include service providers that facilitate the use of cryptocurrencies, even if they do not possess the money or cryptocurrencies involved. These changes "will enhance the regulatory framework for payment services in line with global regulatory standards and will allow MAS to be nimble and responsive in addressing various risks in the payments landscape," said Mr Ong.

#### **FUEL FOR THE FUTURE**

Global partnerships have become key in the push for sustainability as the ongoing climate

We need to work together.
We need to work with governments, and with external organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as academia, in order to create a safe and positive Internet environment for everyone.

Mr Donny Eryastha, Director of Public Policy for ByteDance

crisis intensifies. These partnerships have offered new avenues for growth, including in the maritime sector, which accounts for approximately 2.5 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, according to the International Maritime Organization.

A global consortium of firms recently collaborated to design and deliver Singapore's





SINGAPORE RECENTLY AMENDED ITS PAYMENT SERVICES LEGISLATION IN LINE WITH GLOBAL REGULATORY STANDARDS.

first hybrid electric fast launch. Each of the five firms in the global consortium is responsible for different elements of the project, which will help Singapore's maritime industry reduce carbon emissions and become more environmentally sustainable. The project will target the 4,000 or so smaller vessels, work boats and crew boats that provide goods and services to ships calling at ports, and help them transition to using renewable energy.

Singapore also leads the way in providing lowand no-carbon maritime solutions to other countries. In 2018, Norwegian shipping company Norled AS placed an order with Singapore-based Sembcorp Marine for the design and construction of hybrid passenger ferries. These vessels, which can each accommodate up to 300 passengers and crew, will be able to conduct zero-emission operations using lithium-ion batteries. They were designed specifically for Norled AS' shortsea Hella-Vangsnes-Dragsvik route in one of the Norwegian fjords. "Sembcorp Marine's project with Norled AS demonstrates our ambition to be a leading provider of renewable energy-driven solutions," said Sembcorp Marine Specialised Shipbuilding head Mr Tan Heng Jack.

Separately, Norled AS awarded the design of the world's first liquid hydrogen ropax ferry design to LMG Marin, a Europe-based wholly-owned subsidiary of Sembcorp Marine. Unlike the battery-powered design, this vessel will be equipped with a combination of lithium-ion batteries and 400kW hydrogen fuel cells, resulting in zero emission during operations. Such design experiences gained through overseas subsidiaries complements Sembcorp Marine's range of sustainable solutions for global markets.

#### WEEDING OUT THE FAKE

The widespread adoption of social media and smartphones has brought the issues of fake news,



VESSELS DESIGNED BY SINGAPORE-BASED SEMBCORP MARINE HAVE ALLOWED NORWEGIAN BOAT OPERATOR NORLED AS TO CARRY OUT ZERO-EMISSION OPERATIONS.



CROSS-BORDER MEDIA LITERACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAMMES HELP TACKLE THE SCOURGE OF FAKE NEWS.

disinformation and misinformation to the fore. The Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are especially aware of this, given the growing rate of internet consumption in the region. According to the e-Conomy SEA 2020 report, 40 million new users in SEA joined the internet in 2020, compared to 100 million between 2015 and 2019. The report also found that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about permanent and massive digital consumption in the region — more than one in three digital services consumers are new to the digital service, and 94 per cent of them intend to continue their newfound internet consumption habits post-pandemic.

It can be tempting to view this as a domestic problem for governments to tackle individually — and many have, putting in place domestic legislation to protect their public against fake news. But a regional approach is also useful, as it allows countries to share best practices, and promote cross-border media literacy and public awareness programmes. These plans were born out of discussions as the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) Roundtable Discussion on Fake News and Communicating the Right Information in 2017.

More projects will be implemented in ASEAN Member States to strengthen public education and communication of issues surrounding fake news. In Singapore, the Government works closely with and supports partners in their information and media literacy programmes. For instance, the National Library Board's Source. Understand. Research. Evaluate (S.U.R.E.) programme teaches students, working adults and the general public how to discern false information from fact. Efforts like these are complemented by that of partners like the Media Literacy Council which runs the Better Internet Campaign that promotes safe and responsible use of digital technology. "In order to ensure that everyone is on board as we build up our digital economy and cultivate our digital society, it is essential that ASEAN works together to preserve trust in our digital ecosystem," said Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Mr Heng Swee Keat at the Opening Ceremony of the 14th ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information Meeting in 2018.

## STRONGER TOMORROW

Singapore's Committee on the Future Economy was convened in 2016 to develop economic strategies for the 2020s.

Over 9,000 stakeholders were consulted in the process.



A partnership with Singapore-based Sembcorp Marine has helped Norwegian ferry operator Norled AS go green.