

[Embargoed until after delivery]
[Please check against delivery]

**SPEECH FOR MAYOR LOW YEN LING
MAYOR OF SOUTH WEST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL AT THE SME CENTRE CONFERENCE
ON 1 APRIL 2016**

Guest-of-Honour MOS Koh Poh Koon

Mayors

SPRING CE

Chairman of the SME Centre/President of the Business Association

SME representatives

I am very glad to see so many SME participants here today.

2 The SME network is an integral partner of the CDCs because it contributes to the vibrancy of the community. Three years ago in 2013, the PA/CDCs, 5 Trade Associations and Chambers and SPRING Singapore started a journey to build a strong SME network in the community and set up an SME Centre @CDC at each district. Through the CDCs' network, the 5 SME Centres @CDC assisted 11,000 SMEs.

With the co-location of the SME Centres @CDCs at CDC offices, we have raised awareness of this initiative, and created synergies in terms of outreach activities to generate greater impact in the community. SMEs who benefited from the SME Centre @CDCs' help in turn offered employment to local residents, and participated in community give-back programmes such as community vouchers. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the five trade associations and chambers for partnering us and overseeing the SME Centres @CDC. Together with the dedication and hard work of their business advisors, we have strengthened the resilience of our residents and made the community more caring.

3 I am honoured to announce, on behalf of my fellow Mayors, this second phase of the collaboration between CDCs, SPRING Singapore and SME Centres @CDC. For the next three years. We will deepen the partnership of the SME network with the community. Whilst we continue to reach out to all heartland business communities and provide a one-stop service where SMEs can seek relevant advice, we will also facilitate in capabilities upgrading; and deepen engagement through aggregating the needs of the SMEs by trade /locality concerns and offer possible solutions. One example of a successfully assisted SME is Elite Translation

Asia Pte Ltd, which was advised by SME Centre @CDC. Previously, Elite Translation Asia Pte Ltd faced difficulties trying to compete with larger players in the industry. The Business Advisor from the SME Centre assessed the SME's needs, and helped them to scope a branding project with support from the Capability Development Grant. The branding exercise helped the company to evolve from a local-centric company to a regional player by increasing their profile in the Asian market. As a result, the SME experienced a 15% increase in annual turnover between 2014 and 2015.

4 Today's ceremony signifies this importance work ahead that is to expand the outreach to more SME networks and to deepen the engagement with the SMEs, not only as business entities, but as community partners in the community for the community. Let's us continue this journey confidently toward SG100.

Thank You