



SPEECH BY MR BENEDICT CHEONG, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TEMASEK FOUNDATION AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 'TEMASEK FOUNDATION SERIES ON TRADE & NEGOTIATIONS': RSIS - WTO PARLIAMENTARIAN WORKSHOP, 25 MAY 2015 at MARINA MANDARIN HOTEL SINGAPORE

Mr. Baey Yam Keng, Chairman, Singapore Government Parliamentary Committee on Culture, Community and Youth,

Ambassador Roberto Azevêdo, Director-General, World Trade Organisation,

Mr. Keith Rockwell, Chief Spokesman, World Trade Organisation,

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies,

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning.

I am pleased to join you this morning at the official opening of the RSIS – WTO Parliamentarian Workshop 2015, under the '**Temasek Foundation Series on Trade & Negotiations**'.

2 Since 2011, Temasek Foundation has been honoured to be part of a joint partnership with S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to present this Parliamentarian Workshop. Parliamentarians, as most of you in the audience are, play a key role in the facilitation of good international trade relations. I am sure that you would attest to the fact that negotiating and managing a country's participation in trade agreements has grown increasingly complex. With this in mind, it is more important than ever for trade officials to gain the knowledge and skills to deal with the complexity of negotiations, day-to-day policy-making, and implementation in relation to trade issues and agreements.

3 This Parliamentarian Workshop is but one of the key programmes that the Temasek Foundation supports as a platform for trade officials in Asia to have a deeper engagement on international trade issues. Our partnership with RSIS dates back to 2008 when we first collaborated to provide training to build the expertise of policy makers and trade professionals in Asia. Aside from the annual Parliamentarian Workshop, another signature programme has been the in-country training courses that have been conducted in various countries such as Bhutan,

Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. There is certainly no one-size-fits-all approach in the world of international trade. Hence, these courses have proved to be successful in deepening the understanding of trade negotiations and international trade on specific topics that are of greatest interest to individual countries. I am pleased to share that the next phase of the in-country training courses will be extended to Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam.

4 Contributing to a thriving, prosperous and connected Asia has been Temasek Foundation's mandate since our inception. Set up in May 2007 by Temasek, an investment company based in Singapore, the foundation has committed almost S\$150 million over 8 years to programmes that build capability in health care, education, urban management, public administration, and disaster-preparedness. And it is our hope that through these programmes, and those offered under the '**Temasek Foundation Series on Trade & Negotiations**', that there will be stronger people-to-people connections and greater economic integration and growth in Asia.

5 My deepest appreciation goes to Ambassador Ong Keng Yong and his team at RSIS for their leadership and passion in driving the programme, and I am confident that our continued partnership will contribute positively to the trade community in Asia and internationally.

6 On a final note, thank you to Ambassador Azevêdo for taking time to join us today to deliver the keynote address, and my heartiest congratulations to the World Trade Organisation as you commemorate your 20th Anniversary. May the WTO continue to advance the growth of trade so that communities in Asia and globally will benefit from greater economic progress.

7 Thank you.