

WELCOME ADDRESS BY MS TAN PUAY HOON, PRESIDENT OF THE RESTROOM ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE) (RAS) AT THE LOO (LET'S OBSERVE OURSELVES) AWARDS ON WORLD TOILET DAY, 19 NOV 2014, 9.00AM, AT INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION (ITE) COLLEGE EAST

A very good morning to:

Our Guest of Honour Mr Choi Shing Kwok, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources

LOO (Let's Observe Ourselves) Awards recipients, partners, supporters and distinguished guests

We are delighted to welcome all of you to our sixth LOO Awards as we jointly commemorate World Toilet Day today. We wish to first extend our heartiest congratulations to all award recipients for your exemplary contributions of sustaining high restroom standards over the years.

Higher Toilet Standards

While most of our recipients today are proud owners of star-rated Happy Toilets, we are pleased to receive very positive feedback from some owners. They have expressed their desire of achieving a higher accolade surpassing the current 5-star Happy Toilet rating. The Happy Toilet Programme was launched during the SARS outbreak in 2003 to focus on toilet design, cleanliness and maintenance. Five years later in 2008, the programme was revamped to include another two key areas namely effectiveness and user satisfaction. It has

been six years since the revamp, it is time to review our current assessment criteria and launch a new 6-star Happy Toilet rating.

With higher expectations from the public, it is pertinent to review our current scoring system for four and five-star ratings. While the current three-star rating is equivalent to the minimum standards set by the National Environment Agency, the assessment criteria and score of at least 60 will remain the same. However, higher scores will apply to four and five-star ratings. Currently, four-star Happy Toilets need to achieve a score of at least 80 and be equipped with user-friendly facilities such as toilets for wheelchair users, aged and children. Five-star Happy Toilets on the other hand, have to achieve a score of at least 90 and be equipped with both user-friendly and eco-friendly facilities. The change in the scoring system will see much fewer five-star but more three and four-star Happy Toilets.

As for the new 6-star Happy Toilet rating, the toilet has to achieve a near perfect score of at least 104 out of 108. Apart from the provision of user-friendly and eco-friendly facilities, adoption of technology to increase productivity and efficiency such as automated feedback system, odour monitoring and automated cleaning are required. In addition, all cleaning attendants maintaining the 6-star Happy Toilets must have undergone the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) module in washroom cleaning. Therefore, we are partnering with the Center for Competency-Based Learning & Development (CBLD) to look into this. Upon successful completion of the WSQ module in washroom cleaning, cleaning attendants will also receive a certificate from us. As of today, none of the existing 5-star Happy Toilets has met the new 6-star Happy Toilet rating. We are certainly looking forward to

certifying a 6-star Happy Toilet soon.

Future Plans

While Happy Toilet assessments and accreditations remain our key strength and focus, we wish to take a bold step to gradually position ourselves as a professional assessment and accreditation body, or even an authority, to oversee all toilets in Singapore such as all floor plans with toilet design should also be submitted to us to ensure new toilets are properly constructed in accordance with our latest Guide to Better Public Toilet Design and Maintenance, which was launched at the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Conference last year.

Last year on World Toilet Day, the WASH Conference was organised for building owners and qualified persons such as architects, engineers, environmental and facility management professionals. Moving forward, a World Toilet Day Forum will be organised next year for teachers and students to share and discuss the implementation of more impactful toilet projects. This forum aims to raise awareness among youths on the importance of toilet hygiene and etiquette. A World Toilet Day Fund will also be made available from April next year to encourage schools to embark on projects and activities to commemorate World Toilet Day every year. More details will be made available at a later date.

We believe good restroom etiquette should be inculcated from young. Therefore, we are not leaving the preschoolers behind. We will be launching a new holistic Happy Toilets @ Preschools Programme by the end of this year. This new programme will adopt a similar approach as the current STAR

(Sustaining Toilets As Restrooms) Awards school education programme. It will look at toilet standards, staff training and education of preschoolers and their parents or guardians. More details will be made available at a later date.

While school education remains one of our key focuses, public engagement is another priority and we have actively engaged close to 30 adult volunteers since August this year to conduct mystery Happy Toilet audits. We will extend such audits to coffeeshops and hawker centres next year. Apart from audits, we will also look at staff training for coffeeshops and hawker centres. A comprehensive proposal will be submitted to the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources in the near future.

Conclusion

Finally, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to the Guest of Honour Mr Choi, partners, supporters and distinguished guests for taking time to attend this event. I wish to again congratulate all award recipients for your strong commitment. I hope we can all continue this win-win collaboration to achieve higher toilet standards for many years to come. Together, let's build a more gracious society, embracing excellence in restroom culture.

Thank you.