

**OPENING ADDRESS BY MR PETER ONG, CHAIRMAN, ENTERPRISE SINGAPORE,  
AT THE SINGAPORE TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS INSIGHTS SERIES ON 15  
OCTOBER, 9:00AM**

**Introduction**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

1. Thank you for joining us at the Singapore Transport & Logistics Insights Series. We have organised this in collaboration with our 28 partners to help local transport and logistics businesses learn more about the capabilities that they could enhance, and initiatives that can be tapped to capture business opportunities.
2. On this final day of the Series, we will share new avenues for businesses in the sector to uplift their capabilities. To deepen open innovation between corporates and startups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), we will be launching the third Trade and Connectivity Challenge, also known as TCC. At the Tech Dialogue, industry veterans will reflect on how businesses can use technologies to manage, optimise and even grow operations.

**Connectivity with the world has been Singapore's raison d'être. Trade has enabled us to prosper. As a small economy, we are highly susceptible to external headwinds, but we can manage these challenges and seize opportunities**

3. It has been almost two years since COVID-19 hit us. Like most industries, Singapore's trade and connectivity sector is facing immense changes. Accelerated transition to a

digital economy, increased bifurcation of supply chains, and a shift towards sustainability are some to name.

4. Singapore took a prudent and balanced approach in handling the pandemic – safeguarding public health, whilst keeping our doors open for trade and business. This has allowed us to build on our reputation as a trusted trading hub.

5. But is this enough? What can our SMEs do to tide through the difficult times, and to look for new growth? Let me share three observations on how some local innovators are developing new solutions to uplift fellow SMEs' capabilities during this pandemic period:

a. With movement restrictions, COVID-19 has made eCommerce an imperative. To aid companies in their digital transformation, and support supply chains in meeting demand surges, Infolog has developed a one-stop omni-channel integration platform for eCommerce management. With this solution, users can quickly integrate their existing systems with different retail channels, ranging from eCommerce platforms, online marketplaces to “bricks and mortar” stores to retrieve orders and fulfil them seamlessly.

b. Recent supply chain disruptions have also led to a demand for greater transparency on the movement of goods to support the need for network agility and enhanced orchestration of supply chains. To that, companies like Mega Fortris, Viatick and NP Online have come together to develop a new Next-Gen Smart Box. These IoT-enabled tote boxes will not only provide logistics operators with real-time visibility on cargo movements, they will have an auditable function to identify liability when met with costly events like pilferage or cargo spoilage.

- c. Workplace restrictions have also spurred companies to rethink their need for automation. To help warehouse operators sustain their operations and keep global supply chains moving, Botsync has developed a new series of automation solutions to address such needs.
6. These fine homegrown examples show how our local ecosystem has evolved from being adopters of technology, to being developers of our own solutions.

**As countries progressively lift restrictions and reopen economies, the sector must now explore new ways to evolve so that it can cope with changes in the operating landscape**

7. While COVID has presented new opportunities for innovative business developments, few feel equipped to pursue. Hence, this Insights series is an augmentation of what ESG thinks is necessary to equip companies with capability upgrading opportunities and know-hows to meet new challenges. This is why it covers topics from HR best practices, the launch of new standards, to emerging areas such as sustainability.
8. At the enterprise level, digitalisation and automation remain as pertinent challenges for the sector. A recent DBS survey on Digital Readiness showed that only 72% of Singapore SMEs have a form of digital transformation strategy. There is more that can be done on this front, given the extensive government support packages available.

9. To future-proof our sector, we also need bold and ambitious projects that can vastly improve Singapore's standing as a trade node. This means that we must remain open to industry-level collaborations as well as double down on the use of digital infrastructure such as SGTraDex that can synchronise supply chain processes and improve the connectivity of supply chain ecosystems locally and globally.
  
10. With a global shift towards sustainability, Singapore companies must recognise the need to make the green transition. I am happy to note that two Scale-up SG companies, Ascent Solutions and Evercomm Singapore, and local FinTech startup, Hashstacs, are driving a new collaboration known as CO2X. This initiative will allow optimisation of fleet to achieve cost savings, reduce carbon footprints, and open access to green financial services. A Memorandum of Understanding with 10 industry partners to explore collaborations in the use of this sustainability solution will be signed later.

**A culture of collaboration and innovation will be a key differentiator for the Singapore economy**

11. The pandemic has placed additional pressure on corporates to deal with business disruptions and improve the longevity of their business. Companies must realise how technology game changers can revolutionise the state of their businesses.
  
12. Last year, we embarked on 3 National Innovation Challenges under the ambit of the TCC Industry Track. The 3 projects, by SATS, YCH and Container Depot and Logistics Association of Singapore (CDAS) were meaningful in their own ways. For example:

- a. CDAS, a trade association representing the interests of container depot and logistics operators, put up a challenge to call for solutions capable of inspecting containers autonomously or remotely, to solve longstanding industry issues. Through this challenge, 4 solvers were selected to introduce automated, AI-driven inspection solutions that can be adopted to reduce the reliance on manual labour and improve handling capacities at depots.
  - b. Our local ground-handling company SATS is also working with Ascent Solutions to introduce a Smart Airway Bill Track & Trace Solution. The introduction of a common standard for SAWB labels offers the industry an opportunity to streamline the manner it identifies, tracks and processes shipments through critical handling points. By adopting common standards that reduce fragmentation in the industry and increase cohesiveness, the ability of the industry to provide superior air freight services is enhanced.
  - c. On the logistics front, YCH is working with French AI company, Fieldbox.AI to create a concept known as Warehouse Virtual Operations Manager (WVOM). WVOM is a cost-efficient and user-friendly resource management and planning solution that optimises productivity regarding manpower and equipment utilisation at warehouses' operations.
13. Startups and SMEs have an advantage to enable agile problem solving. The participation of the 6 entities such as Ascent and Fieldbox.Ai are clear demonstrations of how they can contribute to the problem-solving process.
  14. Innovation continues to be at the top of ESG's priorities in driving economic transformation activities. Today's launch of the 2021 edition of the Trade and

Connectivity Challenge (TCC) is a testament to ESG's continued belief that open innovation platforms are an effective means to catalyse co-innovation between corporates and start-ups to boost the overall capabilities and resilience of our businesses. TCC 2021 will feature 13 challenge statements from 9 corporate sponsors. We are pleased to welcome back companies such as Lumens Auto and Singpost and their repeat participation validates the value they have been able to derive.

## **Conclusion**

15. Thank you to our partners who have helped realise TL Insights and TCC 2021. I am confident that our collective efforts will help trade and connectivity sectors seize opportunities for innovation and growth. With that, I would like to wish you all a fruitful time today and I declare TCC 2021 open.