

OPENING ADDRESS BY ENTERPRISE SINGAPORE

CHAIRMAN LEE CHUAN TECK

AT THE S&C GALA DINNER 2026

ON 11 JUNE, SHANGRI-LA SINGAPORE

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry, Mr Gan Kim Yong,

Your Excellencies,

President of ISO, Dr Khaled Soufi,

President of IEC, Mr James Matthews

Chairman of Global ACI, Mr Brahim Houla,

Distinguished Guests,

Good evening.

Introduction

1. Welcome to our Standards and Conformance (S&C) Gala Dinner, and a big thank you to our partners who have travelled from different parts of the world to be with us.
2. The world is becoming more complex – global contestations, supply chain disruptions and rapid technological developments. Amidst the many unknowns, trust becomes an even more critical commodity on which global commerce rests.
3. This evening, as we celebrate 60 years of standards and 40 years of accreditation in Singapore, we are also celebrating a journey of trust building that this community has painstakingly undertaken over many years.

Trust – Building the foundation of the Singapore advantage

4. Singapore's transformation from third world to first world was built on deliberate choices. One of those choices was this: For the economy to flourish, trust must underpin every business transaction within Singapore and between Singapore and the rest of the world.

Renowned developmental economist Jeffrey Sachs termed this social trust and institutional honesty. A prerequisite for sustained economic growth.

5. When we began, no one knew whether Singapore's products were reliable, or if our systems could be trusted. We had to earn that trust. To do this, we need strong legal and regulatory structures. Along with this, we also need an internationally credible standards and accreditation framework.

6. We aligned with international frameworks – joined ISO in 1966. IEC in 1990. We began by adopting international standards and progressed to developing our own to suit Singapore's unique context. We launched our first accreditation scheme – the Singapore Laboratory Accreditation Scheme, or SINGLAS in 1986, and became a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Agreement.

7. Today, we hold over 100 participating memberships in ISO and IEC. We have developed over 1,000 Singapore Standards, some of which are now global standards. We even contribute to the drafting of international standards – over 90 of them in the last year alone. Case in point are our national bunkering standards, TR 80 and SS 648 which have since formed the basis for two international bunkering standards, ISO 6996 and ISO 22192, providing certainty and transparency in fuel quality and quantity.

8. We also have 46 accreditation programmes that provide assurance of our systems and processes and 35 Mutual Recognition Arrangements. All these efforts helped to facilitate business transactions and also enable our enterprises to level up their quality. Most importantly, they helped establish Singapore as a trusted business hub.

S&C: A Unifying Framework in an Uncertain World

9. Tonight, I would like to thank all the dedicated people who made this possible. Partners from the Singapore Standards Council and Singapore Accreditation Council. Government agencies who have participated in various standards setting exercises. Testing, inspection and certification companies. Industry bodies. Our international friends from ISO, IEC, Global ACI and others. And of course, the S&C team within Enterprise Singapore. You have all contributed to making Singapore a trusted name globally.

10. The foundation that we have established matters, but the work does not stop. In the next lap of our journey, the Singapore S&C community needs to go beyond building trust for Singapore. We need to also contribute to building bridges across the widening chasms in the world. S&C can provide a common ground, offering a neutral, rules-based foundation that builds trust between countries, keeps markets open, and enables businesses to innovate and internationalise.

11. We will do so in three ways:

- First, we will offer Singapore as a test bed to pilot new standards. This is especially important in emerging areas like A.I, clean energy, healthcare and biomed.
- Second, within our neighbourhood, we will work with ASEAN partners towards greater harmonisation of standards. This will ease access to ASEAN's 680 million people.
- Third, globally, we will lean forward even more in ISO and other organisations to help develop standards for the world.

Closing

12. In closing, six decades of S&C excellence have laid a strong foundation for Singapore. To the leaders of ISO, IEC, Global ACI, and over 40 national and industry bodies here – your presence reflects decades of work done together. The work has been exciting and rewarding. I believe the next chapter of our work will be even more so. We look forward to partnering with all of you on this journey.

13. Thank you.