

**EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY  
PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**SPEECH BY MR THARMAN SHANMUGARATNAM, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, AT THE AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF THE GREEN WAVE ENVIRONMENTAL CARE PROJECT FOR SCHOOLS 2004 ON MONDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2004, AT 1515 HOURS, AT GOODWOOD PARK HOTEL**

Mr Heng Chiang Gnee, Chairman, Sembawang Shipyard

Students, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Afternoon

## **INTRODUCTION**

1 It is a pleasure to be here this afternoon at the second award presentation ceremony of Sembawang Shipyard's Green Wave Environmental Care Competition.

## **A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER EFFORT**

2 I would like to thank Sembawang Shipyard for its public-spiritedness in organising this annual competition. It is also heartening to see that Sembawang Shipyard's alliance partners, Shell and BP Shipping, are lending their support by co-sponsoring the top awards. Environmental care and protection must involve many stakeholders, and I am glad that corporate organisations are taking a pro-active role in nurturing an appreciation of its importance among our younger generation.

3 Like many cities around the world, Singapore faces challenges in protecting its environment. It requires continuous attention, and continuous effort.

4 As the 2004 Clean Card<sup>1</sup> by the now renamed Ministry of Environment and Water Resources shows, Singapore is managing well in a good number of aspects of environmental protection. Our

---

<sup>1</sup> "Singapore Clean Card 2004" is a report card published by then-Ministry of the Environment to record Singapore's achievements in environmental protection and addressing the challenges ahead. It is available at [www.mewr.gov.sg](http://www.mewr.gov.sg).

air quality is one of the best among cities in the world. We have reduced the amount of waste we generate - by 10 per cent in 2003 compared to 2000. The overall recycling rate has also increased from 40 per cent in 2000 to 47 per cent by last year. And our consumption of water has dropped.

5 More can be done. We are still too much of a throw-away society. The principles of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle are the basics, which we have to instil from young. Each of us as Singaporeans have to take ownership of the environment and look at how we can contribute toward its care. We are still a long way from the “green culture” that some other developed countries, especially the Nordic countries, are well known for. But through collaboration among all stakeholders – the government, corporate players and community organisations, we can make environmental care a natural part of our lives.

### **EXPANDING THE LIMITS**

6 Green Wave is a useful platform for getting young Singaporeans involved in this. Through the competition, students will gain an appreciation of the environmental challenges that both Singapore and other cities face. But more importantly, I hope their participation will set them on a journey of life-long concern for the environment.

7 The competition fits well with what our schools are doing to increase the level of environmental awareness and action among students. Environmental care is a key component of our schools' Community Involvement Programmes. Students are encouraged to do their part for the environment through park adoption and recycling efforts, among others.

8 The competition is also interesting because it challenges students to come up with creative, out-of-the-box solutions. It seeks to motivate students to experiment with ideas and technologies to develop new schemes to protect the environment. This again ties in well with what we are working towards in education. We want to nurture young Singaporeans who keep looking beyond their textbooks, and who want to use their energies to create a better society. Competitions like Green Wave provide them an opportunity to identify real life problems, work in teams, undertake research and come up with practical solutions.

## NOVEL IDEAS

9 I am glad that more schools and students are coming forward. That the competition is receiving more entries, from 116 in 2003 to 126 entries this year, is a heartening sign. I am also glad to note that the judges found the standard of entries to be higher this year. Through their projects, the youngsters have shown us that there are many novel and innovative ways to protect the environment.

10 Two Ngee Ann Polytechnic students identified a gap worth thinking about. From their survey, they found that 70 per cent of people in Singapore who use water heaters will let the water run till it becomes warm before showering. I suspect the true figure might be higher. The two students estimated that 280,000 litres of water are wasted in this manner each day. To overcome this problem, they designed a useful system that allows water to run only when its temperature reaches the user's selected setpoint. Now, this is one innovative way to reduce our water consumption.<sup>2</sup>

11 Another example is the excessive use of paper. Despite the digital age, paper usage in offices is still a problem. For some, recycling paper is time-consuming as the documents had to be sorted out. To make the process easy, a team of students from ITE Dover developed a prototype to sort out paper that is reusable, titled the Green Paper Lover.<sup>3</sup>

12 A team of students from Raffles Institution pursued something that young Singaporeans may be very interested in – how to secure mobile phones safely in pockets. They looked around and saw potential in correction tape, which many students discard after use. Recycling the gears and the casings of the correction tape, they designed a device with retractable string to secure mobile phones safely in pockets.<sup>4</sup>

13 Even our younger students are rising to the challenge. We know of underground MRT stations and expressways, but 11 year-old Jeremy Eu and Jeremy Wee of Anglo-Chinese School (Junior) asked – why not underground reservoirs. This may just be another alternative for our water supply in land-scarce Singapore.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> The entry receives the 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize in the Tertiary level category.

<sup>3</sup> The entry receives the 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize in the JC/CI/ITE category.

<sup>4</sup> The entry receives an Encouragement Award in the secondary level category.

<sup>5</sup> The entry receives a Merit Award in the primary level category.

14 It is heartening to see these students challenging assumptions and looking for new ways to solve real environmental problems in our society. I urge more schools to encourage their students to challenge themselves and set everyone else thinking in the process.

### **CONCLUSION**

15 I am sure that Sembawang Shipyard's target of introducing the Green Wave Competition to all students in the ASEAN region by 2008 will enhance the standards of the competition further.

16 I commend all award winners and participants for their good work. I wish all of you a pleasant afternoon.

---