

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY SCCCI PRESIDENT
19TH SME CONFERENCE
20TH INFOCOMM COMMERCE CONFERENCE
HALL 404, SUNTEC SINGAPORE
9.15AM, 16 AUGUST 2017**

尊敬的新闻及通讯部长雅国博士、
各位外交使节、政府部门长官、
各位主讲嘉宾、海内外朋友、
总商会董事和会员、
女士们、先生们，大家早上好！

欢迎各位出席今天的商业盛会。大会的主题是：“未来中小企业：迎向新常态，开创新机遇”。

今年，是总商会举办“资信商业大会”的第 20 个年头；“中小型企业大会”也在今年迈入第 19 届。改变、创新是新常态。过去 20 年，我们不断提醒自己，每年在筹办大会时，必须与时俱进、推陈出新。

两天的会展，无论从规模、出席人数来看，都刷新了记录：

- 25 场各类活动，90 位海内外主讲嘉宾；
- 86 家参展商，包括 11 家政府机构，
- 报名人数超过 6500 人次！

这说明，本地商家朋友们，已经把总商会的年度焦点盛事，看作是一年一度的学习盛会；同时，也和到场的商界人士交流、拓展人脉和商机。在此，我也欢迎马来西亚、缅甸中华总商会的代表们，专程组团前来出席大会。

今年的会展，也有不少亮点，比如说：

- 我们特别设立了“科技实验室”展区，让企业了解，如何通过最新科技，推动业务转型；
- 我也鼓励大家到“体验学习实验室”，学习如何运用电子商务和创建数码内容。

在此，我祝各位来宾，在两天的会议当中，收获满满，并通过转型，来适应新常态，为业务开创新格局！

接下来，我将以英语致词。

Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Communications and Information
Excellencies, Senior government officials
Distinguished speakers and friends
Council Members and members
Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning everyone! A very warm welcome to this year's Chamber flagship SME Conference and InfoComm Commerce Conference!

In this year's SCCCI Annual Business Survey whereby we obtained a total of 710 respondents, we are pleased to note that there is a slight up-turn in business sentiments compared to last year. More than half indicated

that they are stepping up to find opportunities in new growth markets, and to innovate, in the midst of their business challenges. On productivity efforts, 92% have adopted productivity improvement efforts, 5% more than last year. What is significant is that 89% saw that their efforts have borne results. When we asked our respondents which recommendations by the Committee on the Future Economy are of the highest priority to them, they indicated going digital, innovation and going international. These are indeed some very encouraging findings from our survey this year!

With the ongoing economic restructuring and the needs by the companies in mind, the theme for this year is “Future SMEs: Embracing Realities, Creating Opportunities”. We have worked hard to put together a rich two-day programme for you. In total, there will be 25 breakout seminar tracks and workshops, 90 local and overseas speakers, 86 exhibitors including 11 participating government agencies, and more than 6,500 participants, yet another record this year! These numbers are a strong testimony that our local business community and exhibitors have found this conference to be a valuable learning and networking platform.

You can look forward to hearing from overseas management gurus armed with practical experiences, local entrepreneurs, and successful family businesses who will share insights that we hope can inspire you. You can also find professionals and consultants who may give you practical advice on your business, and a one-stop government pavilion where all the relevant government agencies are located.

This year is a milestone year for our InfoComm Conference. In case you are not aware, we are into the 20th edition of this Infocomm Conference!

Twenty years ago in 1997, things were very different compared to today. Back then, the internet was just only starting to gain serious momentum. Most people used dial-up connections to access the internet, and the speed was much slower. Google and Facebook that many are familiar with today did not exist yet. Fast forward twenty years later, we live in a very different world today. The digital economy is disrupting the old economy and many traditional industries.

I would like to share another interesting episode. Almost everyone know who is Jack Ma and Alibaba. In year 2000, Jack Ma, who was 36 years old then, visited Chamber and spoke at an event organized by us. He spoke about the “Alibaba.com” that he had just set up in 1999. At that time, although the internet economy was only in the infancy stages, Jack Ma was already very optimistic of the prospects of how e-commerce can help SMEs to source, buy and sell online.

Alibaba started out as an e-commerce player. But today, it is starting to disrupt traditional sectors by introducing its digital technologies and solutions to these sectors. Retail is one example. “Hema” supermarket (盒马集市) is Alibaba’s off-line, brick and mortar supermarket. Alibaba called it the “new retail” model. It uses customer data and technology to combine online and offline shopping to offer its customers a more efficient and customized retail experience.

While many of our businesses are still in the traditional sectors, they must take disruption and the digital economy seriously. At the same time, a number of new technologies have emerged, such as the Internet-of-

Things (“IoT”), virtual reality (“VR”), artificial intelligence (“AI”), and data analytics, including the related issue of cyber security. These are just some of the technological means and tools that, if applied appropriately, can help to transform and re-invent your business. You can therefore be more future-ready, *digitally*.

This is the 19th year that Chamber is organizing the SME Conference. Every year, we try to inject new elements to the event to make it better and more interesting. This year, we are introducing “Experiential Learning Labs” where you can have hands-on learning on e-commerce and creating digital content. There is also a “Tech Newsroom” where you can learn how to make use of VR (virtual reality), AI (artificial intelligence), and data analytics to transform your business. We have also put together “Innovation Inoculation Tours” where you can see first-hand how some of our leading companies, like Starhub, SingPost, Sheng Siong and KHL Printing, apply innovative technologies in their business.

In closing, I would like to thank all our distinguished speakers and panelists, as well as all our partners, sponsors, exhibitors and the media for your great support. I wish you all a fruitful conference over these two days. We hope you will draw much inspiration, and benefit from the networking, as you look to transform your business to be future-ready!

Thank you!