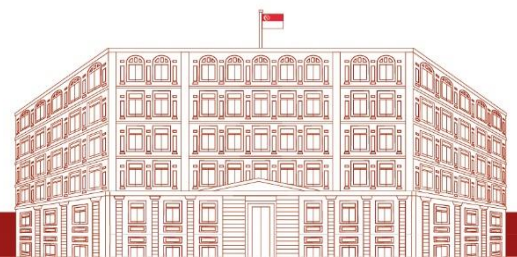




**OPENING REMARKS BY MS SIM ANN, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF CHINATOWN
DIGITALISATION INITIATIVES AND OPENING OF SME CENTRE@CHINATOWN, 24 MAR 2021**

Minister of State for Trade and Industry Ms Low Yen Ling,
Mr Bernard Leong and Mr Peh Cheng Hoo, Co-Chairmen of the Chinatown Digitalisation
Committee,
Mr Roland Ng, President of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI),
Representatives from our tech partners, government colleagues,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Good morning. I am very pleased to join MOS Low to jointly launch our digitalisation efforts in the Chinatown cultural precinct. This is a double celebration as we are also launching the new SME Centre@Chinatown today.
2. These are uncertain times, especially for businesses located in cultural districts like Chinatown, which are traditionally dependent on customer footfall, both local customers or visitors from overseas. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have taken the difficult decision of introducing travel restrictions to manage the spread of COVID-19. One side-effect of these restrictions is a shift in customer preferences and habits, as more of us look to make payments, order food deliveries, and even gain experiences, through digital means. Today, it is more important than ever before, for us to support our Chinatown businesses as they adapt to these transitions.
3. Since 2018, the InfoComm Media Development Authority (IMDA), the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and Enterprise Singapore (ESG) have worked with business and community partners, to help businesses in traditional precincts - like Kampong Gelam and Little India - go digital, seize new opportunities and capture new growth markets.
4. Chinatown has evolved over the years into a vibrant business community with unique cultural offerings. In 2014, Chinatown was the first cultural precinct to offer free street-level WiFi service for visitors. Today's launch in Chinatown marks a further step in our digitalisation journey, by supporting our Chinatown businesses come on board Chope's and Qoo10's platforms, helping our cultural precincts evolve with the times, even while preserving our heritage.
5. I am heartened to see how all of us have come together as an alliance to support our business owners in Chinatown in adopting innovative digital solutions so that they can reach new markets and stay relevant with the changing times. From SCCCI, Chinatown Business Association (CBA) and other business community leaders, to community organisations like the Chinatown Digitalisation Committee (CDC), and government agencies like IMDA, ESG and STB - everyone has stepped up and played our part to help businesses go digital.



6. To complement these efforts, the SCCCI, supported by ESG, has also set up a new SME Centre@Chinatown to provide business consultancy services, digital capability development, and adoption of digital solutions from our tech partners and beyond.
7. I encourage our Chinatown businesses to continue to keep an open mind and explore these digital solutions with our tech partners, so that all of us can work together to capture new markets and growth. Regardless of which stage your business is at, in your digitalisation journey, we invite you to speak with our Business Advisors at the SME Centre who can support you further with choosing the right digital solutions, and planning for your company's digital future.
8. Please allow me to say a few words in Mandarin. 我鼓励牛车水的商家继续保持积极开放的心态，与科技伙伴共同探讨数码方案，大家携手合作，开拓新的市场，推动业务增长。无论您的业务现在是处于哪个阶段，在您的企业数码化过程中，我们邀请您向中小企业中心的商务顾问经行咨询。他们将协助您选择合适的数码方案，让您的公司能为数码未来做好准备，从容地应对数码未来。
9. In closing, let me thank our tech partners and the various stakeholders here in Chinatown, who have contributed to this effort. I am confident that there will be more opportunities ahead for us to reaffirm our partnership and forge new growth, and I wish our partners a great digitalisation journey ahead. Thank you.

