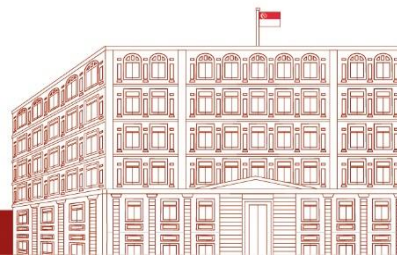


OPENING REMARKS BY MRS JOSEPHINE TEO, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE 2023 EDITION OF DELL'S MENTORCONNECT PROGRAMME (31 MARCH 2023)

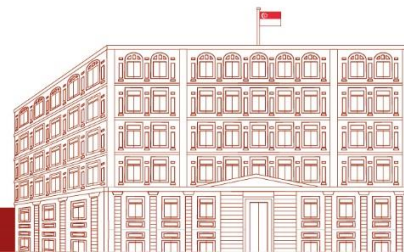
Ms Jacinta Quah, Vice President, APJC Product Marketing at Dell

Colleagues and friends.

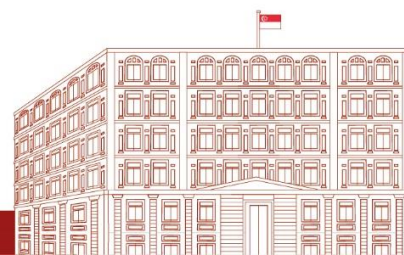
1. Thank you for inviting me. I am really happy to be here to launch this year's MentorConnect.
2. Allow me to first share a little about my own experience in mentoring. In my own journey, there were certainly many people who were not in a formal mentoring relationship with me, but whom I considered to have given me very useful mentoring.
3. From these mentors, both men and women, I learnt how to deal with the most difficult issues we encounter as leaders, such as the need to identify and engage stakeholders; to understand the stakeholders' concerns and find ways of addressing them; and very importantly, how to build relationships and grow trust.
4. From my mentors, I also learnt how to juggle multiple roles and responsibilities. As working women, we often wear many hats. Through my mentors, I learnt to build teams, instead of trying to do it all; to focus our energies on what matter most; and to rally the people around us to move towards a common goal.
5. I also learnt important lessons in life about purpose that we should not climb the ladder of success only to find it leaning against the wrong wall.
6. I also learnt about the intrinsic worth of every person, and what it takes to bring it out.



7. I was blessed to meet these remarkable mentors, whose wisdom greatly enhanced my understanding of the world. To me, the essence of a successful mentorship programme is the creation of structures and processes around which people can access wisdom not through luck, but through systematic intervention.
8. By all accounts, MentorConnect is doing that, and I like the fact that this is a cross-company programme. This feature alone is quite interesting, because the richest learnings for us as individuals will often come from people whose experiences overlap with ours the least. The stretch in our perspectives and thinking can only happen when you reach beyond the usual circle that you operate in.
9. I am therefore glad to learn that since Dell started the MentorConnect programme in 2019, the number of participating companies have doubled, with many reputable companies coming onboard. With growing industry partnership, the programme has also seen more than 270 women professionals being mentored. I am pleased to hear that every participant thus far has reported a positive experience and are keen to recommend the MentorConnect initiative to their colleagues.
10. Some of the mentor-mentee pairings have produced very strong experiences for the participants. Ms Sharon Oh, Product Management & Marketing Lead at Dell, who participated in MentorConnect last year, was thankful to her mentors, who played a pivotal role to help her gain knowledge and confidence. Through the programme she felt empowered to voice thoughts with the support from newfound friendships.
11. As Patron of the 'SG Women in Tech' movement, I am pleased that many more MentorConnect journeys are in the pipeline. I met mentor-mentees who are going to start their journey, such as Ms Candy Loo from ST Engineering and her mentee Ms Sree Ambika from JP Morgan. They have different roles in different organisations and shared that they look forward to sharing their experiences with each other. I am sure their experience will be an interesting one.



12. There is a lot of value in helping women take up leadership roles in tech. As I have said in other occasions, we are doing reasonably well in Singapore, and we can build on this foundation to make further progress. According to a Boston Consulting Group study, in Singapore's tech scene, 41% of our professionals are women. When we compare this to the world's average, this is one of the highest - well above the global average of 28%.
13. Norms in our society are fast changing, with many more men being supportive of women's development and chipping in as allies in the workplace or at home. In this room, I already see quite a few of them. They are committed to be good bosses, colleagues, husbands, and partners.
14. Many industry partners have committed to empowering women in tech. One initiative that companies have committed to is the 'SG Women in Tech Corporate Pledge'. When I launched the Pledge in March 2021, there were just 50 companies. Today, the number of participating companies has grown to nearly 70 companies. I am quite sure more will come on board. Beyond numbers, I am also heartened that participating companies are following through with their pledges. For instance, NCS had pledged to build a female talent pipeline and drive women mentorship and sponsorship programmes. They have since set up their in-house mentorship programme for female staff. There are many such examples besides NCS. I have no doubt that the active participation of our Women-in-Tech companies has spurred other companies to act likewise, creating a virtuous cycle and a much more friendly environment in Singapore.
15. In our institutes of higher learning today, around 4 in 10 students enrolled in STEM disciplines are females. This is not to say only those from STEM disciplines can build careers in tech. In fields like cybersecurity and machine learning for example, domain experts from other fields are often the best people to bring on board, and they often surprise themselves in getting a career uplift as "new-born techies".



16. The Government, on our part, will continue to push for inclusivity and diversity in tech, in partnership with industry and educational institutions.
17. If you know an inspiring female tech leader, I invite you to join me in recognizing her contribution, by nominating her for the 'SG 100 Women in Tech' list, which we publish every year. At the last edition, we received a record 850 nominations. These 100 women are role models who can inspire other women and let them know that there are women who make headways in tech and are carving out new careers for themselves and for others in the industry. In doing so, they will encourage other women to step into the field and grow their careers.
18. In closing, I wish all the participants in MentorConnect a fruitful journey.
19. Thank you, and I wish you a pleasant day ahead.

