

Voices of the Future

APEC Singapore 2009

9 to 15 November 2009



A Special Report on the APEC Voices of the Future 2009 in Singapore

APEC Summit 2009 in Singapore

Since its establishment in 1989, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, or APEC, operates as a cooperative, multi-lateral economic and trade forum committed to reducing barriers to trade and investment, seeks to facilitate regional economic growth and cooperation, and promote dialogue among its 21 Member Economies.

The APEC Summit 2009 was held in Singapore from 9-15 November 2009 with the theme "Sustaining Growth, Connecting the Region". APEC Singapore 2009 is focused on overcoming the economic crisis, exploring ways to foster growth that is both inclusive and sustainable in the post-crisis economic landscape, uphold and strengthen global multi-lateral trading systems by resisting protectionism, and facilitating trade, easing burdens on doing business within and between member economies and increasing the connectivity and efficiency of supply chains.

The APEC Voices of the Future 2009 was organised in conjunction with the APEC Summit and brought together over 120 youth leaders from 18 member economies to Singapore to engage with Heads of Government, Foreign and Trade Ministers, senior government officials, and business leaders on a myriad of APEC-relevant issues. The APEC Voices of the Future Programme was jointly organised by the National Youth Council and the National Youth Achievement Award Council, and supported by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth & Sports and the Virtual Trade Mission Foundation International.



Viswa Sadasivan, Nominated Member of Parliament and Chief Executive Officer, Strategic Moves Pte Ltd, providing the Voices delegates with tips and strategies to enhance their interviewing skills.

APEC Voices of the Future 2009 Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony of the APEC Voices of the Future 2009 was held at the Singapore Management University on 10 November 2009. Natalie Morris, Chairperson, APEC Voices of the Future 2009 Youth Organising Committee, gave the welcome remarks. Ms Morris highlighted the invaluable opportunities provided by the Voices Programme for youth delegates to meet and interact with APEC leaders, and encouraged a high level of dialogue from the participants.

The Guest-of-Honour for the Opening Ceremony was Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports. In his address, the Minister urged that youths should approach the world with humility, curiosity, hope, and collegiality. His speech also touched on how sustainable growth and further cooperation and collaboration between APEC economies could be achieved by incorporating these values. Also present at the Opening Ceremony was Teo Ser Luck, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports and Transport and Chairman, National Youth Council.



Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, addressing the audience at the Opening Ceremony of the APEC Voices of the Future 2009.



Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, interacting with the Voices delegates.

Ho Kwon Ping, Executive Chairman, Banyan Tree Holdings Limited was the Keynote Speaker for the Opening Ceremony. Emphasizing on the role youths have in socio-political and economic transformation, Mr Ho affirmed that the contribution of young people across the region was always, and is still essential. Mr Ho also identified the present civilization shift as having a considerable impact to deliberative decision-making and strategic planning amongst APEC economies, citing the rise of China as the world's fastest growing economy in the 21st Century. Mr Ho also tackled the issue of capitalism, poverty alleviation, and climate change, being a difficult issue to address with major trade offs for consideration, such as striking the right balance between addressing ethics and profit maximisation. He also urges for the development of a form of business practice that places the greater good ahead of mere short term profit maximisation, and advocates the development of social entrepreneurship as an alternative to mere charity.

Following the Keynote Speech was a plenary session which included Mr Ho, Lawrence Kim, Managing Director, Ebenezer NDT Services, and Predeep Menon, Executive Director & CEO, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry as members of the panel. Voices delegates asked the panelists a myriad of questions, a testimony to an excellent address delivered by Mr Ho, one which was thought-provoking and awe-inspiring. The session was moderated by Rahayu Mahzam, a partner at the law firm, Heng, Leong & Srinivasan.



Ho Kwon Ping, Executive Chairman, Banyan Tree Holdings Limited and Chairman, Singapore Management University, delivering the Keynote address.



Panelists from left: Predeep Menon, Executive Director and CEO, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ho Kwon Ping, Executive Chairman, Banyan Tree Holdings Limited, moderator Rahayu Mahzam and Lawrence Kim, Managing Director, Ebenezer NDT Services.



Thuy Van Nguyen of Australia fielding a question for the panelists.

"I have followed Singapore's great Voices program and I know that this is a memorable and motivating year for all who participated."

***Noel Gould
Founder/Chairman
Virtual Trade Mission Foundation
International***



Bryan McCrea of Canada is among the many delegates interacting with the panelists.



Antonina Gromyko of Russia fielding her question during the plenary session.

Tea Session with the President at the Istana

Following the Opening Ceremony, the Voices delegates visited the Istana, which means “Palace” in Malay, and is the official residence and office of the President of the Republic of Singapore, His Excellency S R Nathan. The Voices delegates were warmly welcomed by the staff, and upon the arrival of the President, each delegate was greeted individually. President Nathan also shook the hand of each delegate, and posed for a group photograph. All Voices delegates carried themselves with confidence and humility, and were glad to have had the opportunity to meet the President.



Rafael Hinojosa Abrego, Head of the Mexican delegation with President S R Nathan.



The Chinese delegation interacting with President S R Nathan at the Istana.



Terrence Joseph Clifford, Head of the Canadian delegation interacting with the President.



Voices delegates with President S R Nathan, Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, Natalie Morris, Chairperson, APEC VOF Organising Committee, Karen Lee, Deputy Director, National Youth Council, Marcus Chee, Assistant Director, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports and James Soh, Executive Director, NYAA Council.



ABAC Interview Programme

The APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) was created by the APEC Economic Leaders in November 1995. It serves to provide advice on specific business sector priorities and to be the subject matter expert for issues relating to business. It also serves as a platform for business cooperation for the economies. Through the ABAC Interview Programme, Voices delegates were tasked to conduct door-stop interviews with ABAC delegates with the goal of broadening their understanding of issues that affect their own economy and the region.

“Singapore has created the best APEC Voices program ever and I greatly appreciate the close attention to detail, the intelligence and energy applied to each part of the program and the warm and friendly way we were treated.”

***Prof Donald L Gordon
Executive Director
The Riley Institute, USA***

In Conversation with Jet Li

For the first time in the history of the Voices Programme, the Chairperson for the Voices Youth Organising Committee was given the opportunity to present the mission and objective of the Voices Programme to the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC).

During another scheduled activity, Voices delegates had a dialogue discussion with international action superstar Jet Li, who is also the founder of One Foundation which seeks to promote philanthropy and individual social responsibility around the world. During the discussion, Mr Li shared with the Voices delegates the role that youth can play in promoting a philanthropic society in line with the APEC 2009 theme of promoting sustainable development and greater connectedness in the region.

APEC CEO Summit

The APEC CEO Summit was the main highlight of APEC Singapore 2009, and gathered more than 800 of the world's top leaders to focus on addressing the economic landscape, delve into the vulnerability of the global and APEC economies, and identify the direction, future trends and areas of cooperation for the Asia-Pacific region. The event was held at the Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre. Voices delegates were granted unrestricted access to interview APEC delegates and speakers who were attending the APEC CEO Summit.



Teo Ser Luck, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development, Youth and Sports and Transport and Chairman, National Youth Council with Jet Li, International Action Superstar at the "In Conversation with Jet Li" event.



Huang Haidong of the People's Republic of China interacts with Jet Li during the question and answer session.



Voices delegates in a discussion with Prof Kishore Mahbubani, Dean, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore.

"It was a privilege and honor for my Organising Committee and I to serve in the APEC Voices of the Future 2009. We have made many friends and we were given the invaluable opportunity to learn so much from each other during the conference."

***Natalie Morris
Chairperson
APEC Voices of the Future 2009
Organising Committee and
Deputy Chairperson
NYAA Gold Award Holders' Alumni***



Voices delegates with Jack Ma, Founder and Chairman, Alibaba.com



Elim Chew, Founder and President, 77th Street interacting with Voices delegates.

The youth leaders were also able to observe the APEC CEO Summit proceedings specially arranged by the Singapore Business Federation, where Heads of Government, senior government officials and business leaders delivered their speeches on issues affecting the global economy. This included the Keynote Address by H.E. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore, and speeches by Chinese President Hu Jintao and Jack Ma, Chairman and Founder of Alibaba.com, to name a few. The youth delegates were also able to interview prominent business and political leaders from the APEC economies such as John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand, Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State of the United States of America, Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada and Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister of Australia.



American delegates with H.E. Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State, United States of America.



H.E. Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore delivering the opening address at the APEC CEO Summit 2009.



James Soh, Executive Director, NYAA Council meeting H.E. John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand. Looking on is H.E. Martin Harvey, High Commissioner of New Zealand to Singapore.



Voices delegates with H.E. George Yeo, Foreign Minister of Singapore.



Canadian delegates meeting H.E. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada. Looking on is H.E. Stockwell Day, Minister of International Trade of Canada.



Voices delegates with H.E. Dr Surin Pitsuwan, ASEAN Secretary-General.



Australian delegates with H.E. Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister of Australia.

Visit to Places of Interest

During the course of the APEC Voices Programme, the youth delegates visited places of interest unique to Singapore's history, development and way of life. Singapore, as we know it, is a vibrant and dynamic city-state, boasting a cosmopolitan and diverse population, interspersed with a harmonious blend of culture, cuisine, and art.

Voices delegates were first given a tour of the Singapore Botanic Gardens, which showcases numerous plant species, including rare specimens, reflecting the Garden's 52-hectares of rich and diverse plant life. The delegates also toured the National Orchid Garden, which has over 20,000 orchid plants on display.



Voices delegates on a guided tour of the Singapore Botanic Gardens.



Voices delegates at the Singapore Botanic Gardens, located in the heart of the city.



Learning more about the Marina Barrage.



Voices delegates visiting the Marina Barrage.



Voices delegates get a good view of the Singapore Skyline from the Green Roof of the Marina Barrage.



Voices delegates at the Night Safari, the world's first nocturnal zoo.



Having a good time at the Night Safari.

The Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Learning Centre was also one of the stops of the youth delegates during the APECVOF Programme where they discovered the spirit of Olympism and learned more about Singapore's journey towards hosting the first ever YOG. The Voices delegates also visited the Marina Barrage, Singapore's largest and most urbanised water catchment, and the Tiong Bahru Estate, where they were given the opportunity to see the real Singapore by venturing into one of its oldest housing estates. The delegates were also given a briefing on racial harmony by the Central Singapore Community Development Council and OnePeople.sg which shed light on the government's efforts in advocating for multi-racialism, and facilitate deeper interaction and better appreciation of Singapore's multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities in building a peaceful society.



Voices delegates visiting the Tiong Bahru Estate, one of Singapore's oldest housing estates.



Voices delegates at OnePeople.sg to learn more about racial harmony.



Experiencing local food delights at the Tiong Bahru Market.



Voices delegates gather around the Beijing Olympic Torch at the YOG Learning Centre.



Voices delegates interacting with Ng Ser Miang, Vice President, International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Chairman, Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee.



Learning more about Singapore's journey towards hosting the first ever Youth Olympic Games.

"The Voices program in Singapore was a wonderful, superb program and a brilliantly co-ordinated conference."

***Mahendra Naidoo
Head of the New Zealand Voices
Delegation***

APEC Voices of the Future 2009 Closing Ceremony

The APEC Voices of the Future 2009 Closing Ceremony was held at the Villa Raintree Resort at Labrador Park, where delegates arrived in their national costumes. During the event, delegations set-up booths to showcase some of their traditional delicacies, souvenirs and tourist information, while others gave rousing song and dance performances reflective of their rich cultures. Voices delegates were also treated to a special performance by Y-STARS (YMCA Special Talents Arts & Recreation Society), whose members are gifted in the arts and would like to raise awareness about the ability and vitality of youths with intellectual disability.

Teo Ser Luck, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports and Transport and Chairman, National Youth Council was the Guest-of-Honour for the Closing Ceremony and presented mementoes and certificates to each of the delegates. The evening also included a handover ceremony by Ms Morris to the Japanese delegate as the next Voices Programme will be held in Yokohama, Japan in 2010.

With the backdrop of upbeat and vibrant music, the delegates celebrated the end of a meaningful and enriching Voices Programme in Singapore, and the beginning of new friendships, as well as a deeper appreciation for interconnectedness and sustained growth in the Asia-Pacific region.



Ayumu Takemura receiving the certificate of participation from Teo Ser Luck, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development, Youth and Sports and Transport and Chairman, National Youth Council.



Dance performance by the Peruvian delegates.



Korean delegates showcasing their cultural items at the Closing Ceremony.



Singapore delegates showcasing their dancing skills at the Closing Ceremony.



Members of the APEC Voices of the Future Organising Committee and liaison officers with President S R Nathan, Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, Karen Lee, Deputy Director, National Youth Council, Marcus Chee, Assistant Director, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Natalie Morris, Chairperson, Voices of the Future Organising Committee and James Soh, Executive Director, NYAA Council.



Delegates at the Closing Ceremony of the APEC Voices of the Future 2009 held at the Villa RainTree Resort at Labrador Park.

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