

Speech by Ms Sim Ann, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information at the launch of OneSME on 28 Sep 2020

Ms Tan Bin Ru, CEO (Southeast Asia), OneConnect Financial Technology Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I am very happy to join you this morning at this live streaming workshop and the launch of the OneSME platform.

2. This event marks a milestone in IMDA and ESG's joint efforts to help our Singapore SMEs digitalise.

3. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented impetus for digitalisation among businesses and individuals. We used to think about the benefits of digitalisation primarily in terms of improved productivity, better service quality and greater reach to customers. It was desirable, and we hoped that as many companies would digitalise as possible. But there remained businesses, especially those in traditional trades, who saw digitalisation as optional.

4. Now, the need for safe distancing and the ever-present threat of new lockdowns worldwide have laid bare the risks of relying heavily on traditional ways of doing business. SMEs know that we need to transform to survive, and digitalise to thrive. The question is how.

5. And this is something that IMDA and ESG have been jointly working on. Our response is the SMEs Go Digital suite of programmes. We began working on this before the COVID-19 pandemic, and are now doubling down on our efforts by diversifying and accelerating the delivery of solution packages to SMEs that want to Start Digital, Go Digital and Grow Digital.

6. Today's launch is very much a part of **Grow Digital** – which is about **supporting our businesses to look beyond Singapore for opportunities and growth amidst the pandemic situation.**

7. In June 2020, we launched the **Grow Digital** initiative to help businesses access overseas markets without a need for a physical presence, and ride the global growth in e-commerce. Salesforce's Shopping Index assessed that global revenue from online sales in the second quarter this year skyrocketed by 71% year-on-year – and we hope that as many Singapore SMEs as possible can be part of this growth story.

8. **More than 1,400 enterprises** have since tapped on B2B (Business-to-Business) and B2C (Business-to-Consumer) e-commerce platforms under Grow Digital to expand their market reach. These platforms have been pre-approved by IMDA. They have strong regional or global networks with complementary business services providers as well as proven track records in multiple overseas markets.

9. The Government will leave no stone unturned to support our businesses. Aside from getting our SMEs onto established e-commerce marketplaces, we are also prepared to work with new players who can connect our SMEs with more vendors, more partners and wider markets.

10. This is the backdrop for today's launch. **The OneSME platform** is a new cross-border digital trade platform that enables local SMEs to access new markets such as China and Southeast Asia, in spite of travel restrictions. The OneSME platform is a product of the strong collaboration between OneConnect, IMDA and ESG, and it exemplifies the importance of a strong public-private sector partnership to drive the national digitalisation movement.

11. The OneSME platform aims to be an **all-inclusive digital hub for SMEs to forge cross- border business partnerships within an ecosystem of buyers, sellers, financiers, as well as logistics service providers.**

12. The Chinese market is highly digital and connected, as all of us know, but I have faith that our Singapore SMEs will be bold as they venture into this digital global marketplace. To give our SMEs a headstart, OneSME will proactively match local sellers to a buyer base of 4 million SMEs in OneConnect's YiQiYe (壹企业) SME ecosystem in China. This matching is at no cost to both buyers and sellers during this initial period. I strongly encourage all SMEs with a vision to expand into the Chinese market to seize this opportunity.

13. I am also happy to share that the OneSME platform is **one of the eight initiatives under the Singapore-China (Shenzhen) Smart City Initiative**, which aims to increase economic opportunities in the Digital Economy through digital connectivity, innovation, entrepreneurship, and tech talent exchange and development.

14. I urge enterprises to seize and capitalise on market opportunities offered by the Digital Economy and tap on the available support and programmes by the Government and industry partners, such as the OneSME platform, to help your businesses grow. This is your time to make your mark on the world.

15. I wish you all the best in your digitalisation journey ahead. Thank you.

16. 各位，今天我非常高兴能够为“壹企欣”平台主持推介仪式。本地中小型企业可以通过这个集合买家、卖家，以及物流服务、融资和数码解决方案的一站式平台，打开跨境贸易与合作的渠道，进军中国和东南亚等新市场。

17. 中国市场高度数码化，也高度联通。我相信我们的中小型企业会积极进取，大胆利用新科技，在这个联系全球的数码化市场做出一番成绩。

18. 今年六月，新加坡与深圳就智慧城市合作倡议签署了八份谅解备忘录，以推动双方在数码联通、创新创业以及人才交流与发展方面的合作，借此开拓数字经济所带来的商机。“壹企欣”平台便是其中的一项。

19. 我鼓励更多本地企业把握数字经济所带来的机遇。政府和业界伙伴也会为本地企业提供各方面的支持和援助，例如今天我们所推介的“壹企欣”平台。我希望各位能够充分利用这些资源让自己的业务更上一层楼。现在正是大家在国际市场闯出一片天地的好时机。

20. 最后，我祝愿各位在数码转型的道路上一切顺利。谢谢！