



## MEDIA RELEASE

### PRODUCTIVITY & INNOVATION - IMPROVING THE SKILLSETS OF PROFESSIONALS IN SUPPLY CHAIN AND OPERATION MANAGEMENT

**Singapore, 7 April 2011** – The local manufacturing industry can now effectively build capabilities of its workforce in the area of supply chain and operations management with stronger alliances between Singapore Manufacturers' Federation (SMA), Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and APICS The Association for Operations Management.

This collaboration will see the alignment of two APICS' internationally-recognised programmes, "Certified in Production and Inventory Management" and "Certified Supply Chain Professional" to the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) framework. This benchmarking of the internationally renowned APICs certifications with a national credentialing system is a significant milestone for logistics and supply chain training in Singapore. It also signifies the recognition of supply chain industry as a critical economy driver, as well as the importance of capacity building among the supply chain workforce to meet the growth demand.

Last year, Singapore achieved 14.5% growth in our GDP, boosted by major growth in sectors within the supply chain – manufacturing grew by almost 30%, while the logistics sector contributed more than 9%. This highlights the importance of the supply chain to our economy. In fact, as manufacturers look to outsource their supply chain to improve efficiency and capture additional margin, a further growth in the logistics and manufacturing sectors can be expected this year. To deliver the results, workforce capabilities and

knowledge of the changing business environment must be strengthened and refreshed.

The two APICS programmes, conducted under SMA Centre of Corporate Learning (SMA CCL), targeted at raising innovation and productivity of supply chain professionals and managers, thus come in timely to meet the demand of raising their capabilities. The certifications are recognised worldwide as standards of professional excellence and quality, and commonly cited as key hiring and promotional criteria in many local firms and global MNCs. Research study conducted by APICS and the Cameron School of Business at North Carolina Wilmington also found the certifications to have significant positive impact on an individual's earning potential, with APICS certification holders earning up to 17% more than respondents without these certifications.

The three-party partnership in these two programmes also demonstrates their commitment to collaborate in uplifting productivity of the local manufacturing workforce through capability building, training and upgrading efforts. This commitment will be concluded under the auspices of the Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony held today at the "Asia Supply Chain & Operations 2011" conference, and will be witnessed by Guest-of-Honour Mr Sam Tan, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Trade and Industry. This collaboration with WDA and alignment to WSQ will then also mean that Singaporean workers will enjoy funding support for these programmes.

The inaugural "Asia Supply Chain & Operations" conference organised by SMA and APICS, with support from WDA, is also a display of this commitment. This is the first APICS conference held outside North America and highlights Singapore's importance as a global logistics hub in terms of business opportunities, infrastructure and linkages, as well as skilled manpower. It forms a platform for knowledge sharing among the leading supply chain and operations management organisations in Singapore and the United States. Attendees will gain access to insights and best practices employed by industry experts from transnational corporations, which include Tata Communications, Sonoco and V&M Star.

This alliance will also open the door to other partnerships including collaboration on a manpower study for the logistics and supply chain industry. This data will be useful for companies to gain a better understanding of existing workforce profile, gaps in the industry and project the future demand and supply of manpower over the next 10 years.

Mr Gwee Seng Kwong, Secretary General of SMA, said: “SMA, through one of its Centres of Excellence – Centre for Corporate Learning, will also be working with APICS to develop a training programme, and a series of master classes and seminars. The two-day conference will be a good starting platform for our members and supply chain professionals to learn the best practices from leading companies in the United States and across Asia.”

Ms Julia Ng, Director of Manufacturing and Construction Division, WDA, said: “With the supply chain industry already accounting for 10 per cent of Singapore’s economy last year, this underpins Singapore’s potential as a logistics hub for firms to expand business in Asia. Through this alignment of internationally-recognised APICS qualifications to WSQ, it will expand the availability of quality training in the Supply Chain and Operations Management areas under the STEP initiative<sup>1</sup>, to enhance the employability and competitiveness of the PMEs.”

Mr Abe Eshkenazi, APICS Chief Executive Officer, said: “Asian companies competing successfully in the global economy are focusing on productivity and innovation. This alignment between APICS, SMA and WDA will enable supply chain and operations management professionals in Singapore to play a pivotal role in helping corporations achieve their strategic goals through effective management of these areas. APICS is pleased to partner with SMA to enable individuals to advance and hone their skills through this inaugural conference in Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> Both WSQ-aligned “Certified in Production and Inventory Management” and “Certified Supply Chain Professional” programmes will be placed under the STEP (Skills Training for Excellence Programme) initiative which was recently announced by Minister for Manpower, Mr Gan Kim Yong, at the Committee of Supply (COS) on March 9, 2011.

The Asia Supply Chain & Operations 2011 is held from April 7 to 8, 2011 at the Suntec Convention and Exhibition Centre Singapore. The MOU between SMA, WDA and APICS will be signed by SMA's President Mr George Huang, WDA's Deputy Chief Executive Mr Winston Toh and APICS' Chairman Mr Eric Schaudt.

**Note to Editor**

Please use 'SMA' if an acronym for 'Singapore Manufacturers' Federation' is required. Please note that the 'a' in 'SMA' does NOT stand for 'Association'.

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### **About Singapore Manufacturers' Federation (SMa)**

Established since 1932, SMa's mission is to represent the interest of the Singapore manufacturing community and to drive its competitiveness and sustainable growth through serving industry-specific needs.

SMa is supported by 11 industry groups to serve diverse industry-specific needs, as well as four Centres of Excellence to offer a holistic approach towards improving competitiveness, upgrading skills and capitalizing on new technologies to grow market share. Current membership is more than 2,800 corporate members ranging from SMEs and MNCs, and SMa carries out a myriad of activities to enhance the competitive edge of our members.

For more information, please visit <http://www.sma.sg>

For information about the Asia Supply Chain & Operations 2011, please visit <http://www.asiascmevent.org/>

### **About Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA)**

The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) enhances the competitiveness of our workforce by encouraging workers to learn for life and advance with skills. In today's economy, most jobs require not just knowledge, but also skills. WDA collaborates with employers, industry associations, the Union and training organisations, to develop and strengthen the Continuing Education and Training system that is skills-based, open and accessible, as a mainstream pathway for all workers - young and older, from rank and file to professionals and executives - to upgrade and advance in their careers and lives.

For more information, please visit <http://www.wda.gov.sg>

### **About APICS The Association for Operations Management**

APICS is the global leader and premier source of the body of knowledge in operations management, including production, inventory, supply chain, and materials management, as well as purchasing and logistics. Since 1957, individuals and companies have relied on APICS for its superior training, internationally-recognised certifications, comprehensive resources, and worldwide network of accomplished industry professionals.

For more information, please visit [apics.org](http://apics.org).

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