

Speech by CE STB at Tourism Industry Conference 2026

Greetings

1. Good morning, Minister Grace Fu, partners, and colleagues from the tourism sector. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Tourism Industry Conference 2026.

A Strong Foundation for the Future

2. Last year, I spoke about Tourism 2040, STB's roadmap for the next chapter of quality tourism growth for Singapore. It sets out how we will respond to rising global competition, shifting demographics, and emerging opportunities, to reach our goal of \$47 to \$50 billion in tourism receipts by 2040.
3. I am pleased to share that we are making good progress towards this long-term ambition. In 2025, we achieved a record of \$32.8 billion in tourism receipts and welcomed 16.9 million visitors to our shores.
4. Let us recap some of our collective key achievements last year:
 - a. We are growing as a regional hub:
 - i. Changi Airport welcomed an all-time high of nearly 70 million passenger movements, and
 - ii. We received 375 ship calls and over two million in passenger throughput. The completion of the Marina Bay Cruise Centre Singapore expansion further reinforces our status as Asia's leading cruise hub.
 - b. We brought in new lifestyle products and experiences to invigorate our tourism landscape. We broke ground on two major developments:
 - i. The Porsche Experience centre set to open in 2027, and
 - ii. The Marina Bay Sands' expansion.
 - c. We saw the opening of significant new attractions, including Rainforest Wild Adventure West at the Mandai Wildlife Reserve, the Singapore Oceanarium, and new lifestyle concepts such as WEAVE at Resorts World Sentosa.

Tourism Resilience in an Evolving World

- d. Dempsey, Sentosa and Marina Bay hosted an array of exciting events such as: ‘Delight your PALATE at Dempsey’, ‘Discover Your Good’ at Sentosa, and ‘Adventure Begins: A Magical Bay Celebration with Disney Cruise Line’.
 - e. Major events like POP TOY SHOW 2025, the only such event held outside of China, drew over 23,000 attendees,
 - f. While performances from the likes of BLACKPINK and Ado captivated global fans.
 - g. The Formula 1 Singapore Airlines Singapore Grand Prix 2025 attracted the second highest crowd since its first race, with over 300,000 attendees across three days.
 - h. Our MICE industry continues to demonstrate robust growth. In 2025, MICE tourism receipts grew by more than 35 percent from 2024 to reach \$2.3 billion.
 - i. We convened significant events like the World Sleep Congress and first-in-Asia editions of HealthTechX Asia and LSI Asia.
 - ii. ITMA ASIA + CITME Singapore attracted over 26,000 visitors from 109 countries.
 - i. Singapore’s vibrant cityscape and rich cultural tapestry took centre stage in music videos by Coldplay, Blackpink’s Jisoo and BTS’ Jin – bringing our story to millions of viewers around the world.
5. These achievements reflect the dedication and excellence of our tourism partners – thank you for your contributions in uplifting tourism.

Resilience in the Year Ahead

6. Our efforts as an industry have laid a strong foundation for 2026 and the years ahead. This year, we project \$31 to \$32.5 billion in tourism receipts and 17 to 18 million in international visitor arrivals.
7. We recognise that ongoing tensions in the Middle East pose unprecedented challenges to the tourism industry.
 - a. I thank our industry partners who stepped forward to support stranded visitors earlier this year. What sets Singapore apart is the heart of our industry – your commitment to every visitor and your willingness to go the extra mile.

- b. Our tourism businesses are under strain from the crisis and global uncertainty will persist. While visitor arrivals held up in the first quarter with a three percent year-on-year growth, we expect muted demand in the months ahead. But as during SARS and Covid-19, I am confident that our solidarity and adaptability will carry us through.
8. STB has already stepped up our efforts to support our industry partners to overcome immediate challenges. We will monitor the situation and adjust our support as needed.
9. In the year ahead, STB will intensify efforts to strengthen sector performance and resilience through the three pillars of Tourism 2040:
 - a. Cultivating future **Demand** to seize high-growth opportunities;
 - b. Creating an attractive **Destination**, as we push ahead with new initiatives to strengthen tourism products and experiences; and
 - c. Advancing the **Development** of a future-ready tourism sector.
10. The \$740 million Singapore dollar tranche of the Tourism Development Fund will enable our industry partners to pursue opportunities under these three pillars.

Cultivating Future Demand

11. First, we will grow demand from new and existing markets.

Strengthen and Diversify Market Access

12. Singapore remains a vital air hub, maintaining strong connectivity to key visitor markets like China, Indonesia, Australia, Malaysia, India and beyond.
13. Market diversification is a priority. We are establishing new flight connections to Palembang and Belitung in Indonesia; West Sydney, Newcastle and Sunshine Coast in Australia; and Dalian in China.

Connecting Regional Audiences

14. Strengthening regional partnerships and connecting to new audiences will expand the breadth and depth of our visitor base. In the coming years, we will proudly host several

major platforms that will convene regional thought-leaders and partners in Singapore. These are opportunities to promote and increase capture of intra-ASEAN travel.

- a. This morning, we spoke about Singapore's 2027 ASEAN Chairmanship, and our hosting of the ASEAN Tourism Forum early next year.
- b. This July, we also look forward to hosting the Heads of National Tourism Organisations from ASEAN and dialogue partners from China, Japan, Korea and India.
- c. In the first-ever Asia Cruise Investment Forum 2026, key decision-makers from regional authorities and private sector partners will be meeting in Singapore to discuss port infrastructure developments in Southeast Asia.
- d. These events present unique opportunities for Singapore to showcase our strengths and enhance our regional standing. Preparation for these platforms begins now, and we seek the support of our industry partners in this endeavour.

The Great Singapore Story

15. Our Singapore story remains grounded in passion and possibilities. We will enhance our marketing strategies to stay attuned to shifting travel trends and connect with audiences who seek meaningful and captivating experiences.
16. Last year, we launched "We Don't Wait for Fun", a global marketing effort targeted at the Early Careers visitor segment.
17. Through fast-paced short-form social reels, the campaign highlights how our Early Career visitors can turn spontaneous moments into memorable adventures as they explore neighbourhoods, attractions, and events. In the year since its launch, we have reached more than 390 million Early Career travellers.
18. Riding on this success, we will be extending the "We Don't Wait for Fun" campaign to target the Family segment, through non-stop discoveries that create lasting shared memories for our family visitors.
19. Harnessing the power of film and television, we partnered with top international production companies to feature Singapore's distinctive sights and local character in several projects.

- a. Our partnership with MD Entertainment, Indonesia’s leading production house, saw the filming of “Ahlan Singapore”, an Indonesian romance film set in our city. The film will be released on Netflix later this year.
 - b. Today, we are pleased to announce a three-year partnership with Mr Romance, Korea’s rising drama production house. Our first collaboration, "Buy King", a compelling financial feud drama shot on location in Singapore, starring renowned actors Ju Ji Hoon and Lee Jun Ho, is already in production and you may have seen them filming this week in your neighbourhood.
 - c. We also look forward to upcoming projects that can engage our audiences and inspire travel, including a Japanese feature film “Magical Secret Tour”; a book-to-screen adaptation of Indonesian bestseller “Life is Beautiful”; and Malaysian family drama “The Causeway”.
20. Tapping into the global fandom of music artistes, we are signing a three-year global MOU with Universal Music Singapore this morning to jointly inspire travel to Singapore through their network of international artistes across social platforms and exclusive fan experiences.

Partnerships for Growth

21. Partnerships are the cornerstones of our marketing efforts. I am pleased to introduce three key partners that will raise awareness of our destination, expand our suite of visitor experiences and promote greater spend.
- a. **(Announcement)** Our joint regional marketing campaign with Grab will encourage discovery of our key tourism precincts, while enhanced deals on the Grab Travel Pass will drive greater spending from visitors.
 - b. **(Announcement)** STB renewed our MOU with Weixin Pay to roll out joint marketing campaigns and scale up frictionless Palm Technology for the first time outside of Mainland China.
 - c. **(Announcement)** Yesterday, we concluded an MOU with Xiaohongshu to derive greater insights on Chinese travellers’ consumer journeys. As part of the MOU, we will also work with Xiaohongshu to hold their first Global Tourism Summit out of China here in Singapore.

22. My colleagues Kenneth and Oliver will share our marketing strategies and global efforts to drive Demand in their sessions later this morning – please join us to hear their insights.

Creating an Attractive Destination

23. The second pillar of Tourism 2040 focuses on keeping Singapore vibrant and attractive to captivate audiences. Let me highlight some exciting developments.

Local Identity

24. Local identity is key to establishing Singapore as an iconic lifestyle destination. Strong homegrown brands, anchored by a distinctive local core across our products, experiences and precincts authentically convey our destination stories.

25. We will nurture homegrown intellectual property brands, concepts and products to foster the growth and value proposition of our local enterprises.

- a. Later this year, “World of Absurdities” by Andsoforth will launch their multi-concept immersive experience at A141 Victoria Street.
- b. Together with Enterprise Singapore and DesignSingapore Council, we will roll out the Singapore Collectibles Programme. This initiative aims to assist local businesses, such as Kim Choo Kueh Chang, to develop souvenirs with distinctive Singapore character and attractive packaging. I encourage Singapore brands to reach out and work with us to take your products to the next level.

Precinct Vibrancy

26. Now on to precincts, where new developments are in the works for Orchard Road and Sentosa.

27. For Orchard Road:

- a. New precinct markers and creatively designed street benches will showcase Orchard Road’s unique identity and enhance street-level appeal. Together with the ready-to-use pop-up spaces and exciting proposals supported by our Orchard Road Rejuvenation Initiative, we look forward to a transformation of the precinct.
- b. We are also injecting new concepts and experiences. Earlier this year, we shared that STB will be launching the tender for 37 Emerald Hill for a mixed-use

development comprising distinctive hotel and lifestyle concepts in the coming months.

- c. Let's take a glimpse at the future possibilities of Orchard Road.
 - d. A final piece on the transformation of Orchard Road. In the tranquil Tanglin precinct, Seton Close features four heritage bungalows set within 1.9 hectares of land which has now been rezoned for Hotel use. The site presents an opportunity to develop a unique, low-density hospitality concept.
28. Sentosa is an endearing place to Singaporeans and travellers alike. The Greater Sentosa Master Plan will reinforce its appeal as a must-visit destination.
- a. Greater Sentosa holds exciting potential for the development of world class attractions, hotels, F&B, outdoor events and festivals, in an island setting. The Brani West zone will be one of the largest sites for new attractions development.
 - b. In the coming months, the Sentosa Development Corporation will launch design consultancy tenders to lay the groundwork for some of the key components of the Master Plan.
 - c. I welcome interested developers and concept owners to reach out to us to learn more about the opportunities at Brani West.

Attractions

29. In the near-term, visitors can also look forward to new and refreshed attractions at Sentosa, including:
- a. An immersive flight simulation experience by AltitudeX that will take us on a journey through Singapore; and
 - b. A new day-to-night thrill ride at the upcoming SkySlides within SkyPark Sentosa by AJ Hackett.
30. Enhancements to existing tourism products are underway.
- a. Gardens by the Bay has announced the development of a new five-hectare Wetlands by the Bay. This includes an expansion of the existing Kingfisher Wetlands and a new teamLab museum, featuring teamLab's first-ever multi-sensory indoor and outdoor pedal kayak experience.

- b. **(Announcement)** Bounce Singapore will be undergoing a revamp which will feature interactive competitive games, a new aerial course and kids zone, and upgrades of their signature trampoline areas, while
 - c. Zouk Singapore is renovating its flagship club ahead of its 35th anniversary.
31. Businesses can also introduce novel and exciting experiences through collaborations with global IP owners.
- a. Next month, a CRY BABY themed activation at the Singapore Oceanarium will open. Jointly organised by STB, POP MART and Resorts World Sentosa, it will be the largest activation to date for the Singapore Oceanarium.
 - b. National Gallery Singapore will also launch a Pop Art exhibition in December 2026, featuring over 200 works by more than 110 artists, including Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein, Yoshitomo Nara, and Ronald Ventura.
 - c. STB will partner the Themed Entertainment Association to bring their inaugural Southeast Asian Conference to Singapore this September. As an important platform for global and regional players this conference will reinforce our position as a hub for cutting-edge experiences.

Leisure Events

32. Singapore has established a reputation as Asia's premier event destination, and leisure events have been a key driver of growth. In 2026, we will see more internationally-acclaimed music and sports events, premium lifestyle concepts, and locally-distinct experiences.
- a. As the region's event capital for exceptional live entertainment, music lovers can expect electrifying performances from Post Malone, Guns N'Roses, and Daniel Caesar.
 - i. In partnership with Klook and HYBE, we welcome BTS to Singapore this December, as the BTS World Tour's longest running stop in Asia excluding Korea and Japan.
 - ii. Construction of the Grange Road Events Venue by Live Nation is moving full speed ahead. When completed, it will host a wide range of quality

entertainment in the heart of Singapore at Orchard Road. Let's take a look.

- b. We have an exciting line-up of events for sports fans.
 - i. Just last weekend, we hosted the first-ever Elite Pickleball International Championship (EPIC) 2026, while the global fitness phenomenon HYROX, returned in early April with 14,000 racers.
 - ii. In December, our marquee running event returns with a refreshed identity and format as the BYD Singapore International Marathon presented by adidas. We welcome runners and supporters around the world to enjoy a different side of our little red dot.
- c. Fashion enthusiasts should get ready to indulge in style and flair this year.
 - i. Following the success of the CHANEL Cruise 2025/26 Show Singapore last November,
 - ii. We are delighted to host the prestigious LOEWE FOUNDATION Craft Prize for its Southeast Asia debut this May.
- d. Lastly, talents continue to innovate and deliver locally-distinct experiences. Raffles Hotel and Chef Andre Chiang will be launching industry masterclasses from this month. Homegrown culinary talents and entrepreneurs will be able to learn directly from Chef Andre, following the opening of 1887 by Andre at Raffles Hotel.

Hotels and Wellness

- 33. In 2026, our hotel landscape welcomes exciting new additions and transformations. TUI Hotels & Resorts will debut in Singapore with Asia's first The Mora property. Other new hotel openings include Asia's largest Mövenpick hotel; Varel Singapore, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel; and the newly rejuvenated Frasers House, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Singapore. These signal the hospitality industry's confidence in our tourism sector.
- 34. At last year's TIC, I highlighted the growing interest in wellness tourism. Singapore has a unique opportunity to capture this segment as a city in nature offering urban wellness experiences, safeguarded by high standards.
 - a. We awarded the Marina South Coastal site to Therme Singapore to develop and operate a wellness attraction – the first of its kind in Asia. Construction begins this

year with the attraction welcoming visitors from 2030 onwards. Let's take a look at what visitors can expect from this exciting new attraction.

- b. We aim to grow the number of quality wellness experiences in Singapore. Earlier this month, New Bahru by The Lo and Behold Group welcomed a new wellness concept, Future Resonance, which offers Singapore's first Light Sound Vibration wellness therapy sessions.

Cruise

35. Over the next few decades, major infrastructure developments will be essential to boost capacity and enhance Singapore's standing as a global hub for cruise and MICE.
36. Cruise demand is expected to grow steadily and we are well positioned to capture this opportunity. Alongside the arrival of the **Disney Adventure** in March,
 - a. We will also welcome the seasonal homeport of Royal Caribbean International's **Navigator of the Seas** later this year. In 2027, Explora Journey's **Explora III** will call Singapore home, and we will kick off a three-year partnership with Princess Cruises to increase their seasonal homeport presence in Singapore.
37. Ensuring we have sufficient capacity to support our growing pipeline of cruises is therefore imperative.
 - a. In the near term, the HarbourFront Passenger Terminal will relocate to a new purpose-built facility adjacent to the current terminal. It will be called the Singapore Cruise Centre (HarbourFront) and will elevate the experience of all cruise and ferry passengers. Scheduled to open on 15 July 2026, key enhancements will include a dedicated VIP lounge to support premium travellers, and an automated baggage handling system.
 - b. In the longer term, we are studying the potential development of an Integrated Cruise and Ferry Terminal to meet future cruise and ferry demand.

MICE

38. Next, on MICE. Minister earlier announced that we have identified the Straits View area, near Marina Bay as the potential location for the Downtown MICE Hub.

- a. STB will hold an industry engagement session on 15 May, followed by a Request for Information Exercise to garner feedback on the project parameters. Do check STB's website for more information.
 - b. I invite developers to partner MICE players to jointly submit bids for the Request for Proposal which we expect to call in 2027.
39. The Downtown MICE Hub will reinforce our position as a major MICE City. We can already look forward to new events in our pipeline.
- a. I am delighted to announce that we will hold the Virtuoso Symposium & Virtuoso Impact Summit in May 2027, gathering close to 400 global luxury travel executives. The event will profile Singapore and foster partnerships that shape the future of luxury travel.
 - b. We will also welcome first-in-Asia events like Passenger Terminal Expo Asia 2026, Breakbulk Asia 2026, and the WCA Worldwide Conference 2027, which will bring together industry leaders in key aviation and logistics industries.
 - c. Our renewable energy industry and sustainability sector will come under the spotlight later this year with upcoming events like the Recharge Wind Power Summit Asia-Pacific powered by WindEnergy Hamburg, Innovate4Climate, and the World Hydrogen Energy Conference.
40. We have refreshed two programmes to ensure business travellers have memorable and impactful experiences in Singapore.
- a. Now in its third global edition, INSPIRE Global 3.0 will offer corporate meeting and incentive groups over 30 new options across dining, attractions, thematic tours, and team-building activities to complement their itineraries.
 - b. SMAP 5.0 will expand Singapore's MICE ecosystem through strategic partnerships. It has doubled its partner network, including major aggregators like Expedia, Grab and Klook, to enrich the consumer journey.

Development of a Future-Ready Sector

Industry that Innovates

41. We spoke about Demand and Destination. Let's now speak about how we aim to push innovation and stay future-ready.

42. Our workforce is at the heart of all our initiatives. We will enable tourism businesses to optimise productivity and enhance the visitor experience. We are committed to working with you to build these critical capabilities.
43. I am excited to announce our next phase of Tourism Technology Transformation, or Tcube, which will focus on scaling up technology solutions for the industry in three key areas:
 - a. Unlocking new growth opportunities through data analytics,
 - b. Improving productivity and staying competitive through innovation, and
 - c. Enabling a seamless visitor journey across Singapore through understanding traveller behaviours and needs.
44. Through Tcube, STB will continue to support industry in piloting technologies that will deliver real value across the tourism ecosystem. Let's look at how data and technology can address key industry problems.
45. Our sector must keep pace with ongoing technology trends. STB has developed an AI playbook for tourism, which will help tourism businesses accelerate AI adoption by understanding where and how to apply AI to improve operations and enhance visitor experience.
46. We can already see the impact that AI has on business productivity and visitor engagement. For instance:
 - a. Last month, we partnered Mafengwo, a China-based OTA, to launch AI-powered, multilingual visitor guides at the Mandai Wildlife Reserve's Exploria and Curiosity Cove, and Sentosa's SensoryScape. We have already seen strong engagement and positive feedback from guests.
47. My colleague and STB Chief Technology Officer Jordan will share more on the Tcube Centre of Excellence and the AI playbook during the tech plenary right after this. I encourage everyone to sit in to explore how we can work towards a more innovative, adaptive, and productive industry.
48. I also invite you to visit our tech showcase and experience firsthand how tech solutions can transform our work.

Industry Development

49. We have launched two initiatives for our Tourist Guides and Travel Agents.
50. First, the LEARN + DO Tourist Guide licence renewal framework supports our Future of Guiding 2.0 vision by encouraging guides to keep learning and applying their skills at work to deliver quality experiences.
51. Second, we have streamlined our regulatory processes. The enhanced Travel Agents and Tourist Guides Licensing System, more commonly known as TRUST, launched on 27 April, has made it simpler for travel agents to update and submit business information.

Planning for the Future in an Evolving World

52. Global trends and consumer behaviour may see a major shift over the next decade, and we fully recognise the impact on the tourism workforce and businesses.
53. As we move into the year ahead, I invite industry partners to forge new connections, drive innovation and embark on new ideas. Join us in unlocking present and future opportunities. Together, we will navigate headwinds and chart a course for sustained growth.
54. Thank you.