Singapore's Smart Nation Initiative:
Can We Future-Proof Ourselves?

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In his presentation, Mr Tan Kok Yam shared his views on the rapid technological developments and what it takes to future-proof Singapore. The following is a summary of the major points:

- Technology disruptions will hit us at an alarming pace no matter we do or do not do.

- Falling cost of computing, digital connectivity and rising computational power lead to both great opportunities and great uncertainty. Data has become an asset that will fuel new social and business models which will in turn affect our liveability and livelihood.

- The workforce will have to cope with the faster rate of change, and this involves issues such as the kinds of jobs available, keeping oneself updated and upgraded. It is not only the level and depth of technical skills that one requires, but also the ability to integrate the problem statements to technical solutions.

- Three key areas that countries have to grapple with when using data are (i) need for privacy versus maximal use of data for the good of society, (ii) incentivising data owners to extract more value from data for the benefit of the economy and society, and (iii) different ways of thinking about trust and managing it.

- For people to live meaningful and fulfilling lives in a smart nation, Singapore will require (i) openness of platforms for data sharing, (ii) use of internet as a tool for people to help one another, and (iii) co-creation of solutions and applications from different disciplines and perspectives.