



**CITIES OF LOVE AWARDS (COLA) VIRTUAL CEREMONY,**

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY GUEST-OF-HONOUR, PROFESSOR CHONG TOW CHONG SUTD  
PRESIDENT**

**23 OCTOBER 2020, 2 PM TO 4 PM**

Good afternoon. Ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for being here with us today. The Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) is honoured to be one of the supporting partners of the Cities of Love Awards (COLA) since its launch in 2017.

COLA recognises ground-up initiatives that help create sustainable cities to enhance quality of life and contribute to the love and care for the communities.

Let me first express my sincere appreciation to the organisers of COLA, especially to co-founders, Mr Tai Lee Siang, and Ms Valerie Ang, whose passion to transform lives, environments and societies made this awards ceremony possible.

As climate change and environmental degradation become one of the key challenges of the 21st century, there is a greater and urgent need to deepen awareness and change behaviours in our societies to sustain the planet. COLA is special in that it recognises ordinary people from individuals to small or medium sized enterprises, to large organisations, for their contribution to sustainable living.

This mindset of COLA resonates very well with SUTD's mission to nurture future leaders and innovators who will go on to shape a better world, through a design-centric, interdisciplinary education and research to improve lives, grow economies and sustain the world.

I am therefore really happy to learn that, this year, four out of 14 winners are from SUTD, and two of them were initiated and developed by students.

The students were participants of a design programme (the Design Odyssey) initiated by the SUTD-MIT International Design Centre, with a human-centric focus, rooted in design innovation and social awareness.

This programme, established in 2015, has since engaged over 400 SUTD students and collaborated with more than 600 students from polytechnics, secondary schools, and overseas institutions.

This goes to show that even our youths have shown great interests in developing innovative ideas that can positively impact our society. Furthermore, this reinforces the mindset that COLA aims to promote – that anyone who wants to, can make a difference to our lives, community and environment.

Due to COVID-19, this year's ceremony has to be held virtually.

What the pandemic has proven is that innovative and sustainable solutions are now more crucial than ever to help solve the current challenges facing the world.

Looking ahead, there will be more changes and disruptions in the way we work and live. Hence, the importance of spurring and encouraging everyone to come forward to contribute their ideas is now more vital than ever, in order for us to work towards creating a better world and future together.

I hope that you will all enjoy your time here today, learning more about each of the projects that will be presented to you shortly. I'm sure they will be highly inspirational!

Thank you.