1. Good morning. It is my pleasure to be here at the launch of the Certificate in Opticianry Practice, which is jointly offered by Republic Polytechnic and Department of Ophthalmology National University Hospital.

2. Ophthalmic science is an important field in medicine. In recent times there is an increasing demand for quality eye care. The public is constantly looking for good service from opticians who are the front line service providers for eye care. In 2005, RP partnered with Singapore National Eye Centre to launch a certificate course in Primary Eye Care. This course saw an overwhelming response and I am pleased to announce that we will continue to run this course as part of our continuing education programme.

3. In January 2008, a new legislation came into effect to regulate the practice of Optometry and Opticianry in Singapore. The purpose of regulation is to ensure that those who provide eye care services are properly trained and qualified. All optometrists and opticians are required to register with the Optometrists & Opticians Board in order to practice their profession. In line with this new legislation, Republic Polytechnic is honoured to co-develop this certification programme with Department of Ophthalmology, National University Hospital. The Certificate in Opticianry Practice offers the necessary training to opticians to meet the standards and requirements of the Optometrists & Opticians Board.

4. RP provides a nurturing environment for optical retail staff to enhance both professional knowledge on eye care and their ability to identify eye problems. Modules will be taught by qualified and experienced Academic Staff from the Republic Polytechnic as well as Ophthalmologists and Optometrists from NUH. Fully equipped labs and modern facilities are available to facilitate the learning process. Course participants will also have the opportunity to gain industry experiences by working with industry training partner Carl Zeiss Vision.

5. The launch of the course is indeed timely to meet the continuing need to improve the standard and quality of eye care service for the public. We look forward to play our role in providing further educational and training opportunities to the optical sector in developing overall capabilities for the industry.

6. Thank you.