It is encouraging to note that Singapore continues to be recognised for its infocomm development efforts. Singapore retained its No. 2 position in the Global Information Technology Report 2012 and was first in the Waseda University International e-Government Ranking for the fourth year running, sharing the top spot with the United States.

Co-creating for greater benefits
In the past year, IDA continued to work closely with the industry to launch various initiatives to drive the innovative adoption of infocomm to contribute to Singapore’s economic competitiveness and social development. One example is catalysing the development of Next Generation e-payments. Through an interoperable, multi-application mobile Near Field Communications (NFC) environment, IDA, together with a consortium consisting of major industry players and mobile operators, is putting in place the first interoperable nationwide deployment of an NFC mobile payment system in Asia. More than 10 NFC mobile payment and value-added services are expected by 2014.

The eGov2015 masterplan was also launched with inputs from the people, private and public sectors and would guide public agencies in the next phase of eGovernment development. Among the various eGov2015 initiatives is data.gov.sg, where more than 7,000 government datasets are available for both the public and private sectors to leverage on and co-create new innovative products and services.

Responding to opportunities and challenges
As global technology and socio-economic trends evolve, our models for business, service delivery and citizen engagement need to be reviewed to respond to the changes. Improvements in connectivity, combined with the proliferation of smart mobile devices and cloud computing, present businesses and organisations with new ways to enhance productivity and outreach. At the same time, the growing popularity of social media is transforming the
business-customer interface by providing people with new platforms to provide feedback, generate content and co-create solutions.

In Singapore, the Next Generation Nationwide Broadband Network (Next Gen NBN), a trusted, ultra high-speed infocomm infrastructure, is in place to enable connectivity to homes, schools and businesses. The open access environment offered by the Next Gen NBN spurs competition, opening up many possibilities for innovative products and services to be delivered over the network in the evolving digital environment.

Another exciting possibility is the development of infocomm-based integrated networks, capabilities and solutions for urban infrastructure and sectoral domains. Coupled with analytic capabilities, government agencies and commercial organisations can better understand and identify new patterns in economic and human activities. These possibilities are being looked into under IDA's Smart Cities Programme, where the aim is to optimise the allocation of scarce resources, and enhance liveability, sustainability and economic development.

To ensure that infocomm policies and regulatory frameworks are effective and relevant in a changing ICT landscape, IDA constantly monitors local and global infocomm market trends, developments and regulatory measures, while remaining technology-neutral. As a leader in the regulatory sphere, we also strengthened our domestic regulatory framework in the past year to ensure fair competition in the infocomm sector and protect the interest of consumers.

We announced a reduction in licensing fees for the majority of Services-Based Operators and Facilities-Based Operators from 2013, thereby lowering the cost of business for these service providers. On the consumer front, Quality of Service standards for mobile services were raised, and consumers were empowered to bar premium rate services and to limit their data roaming usage in order to prevent bill shocks.

Leveraging on IDA’s group synergy
As we look forward, IDA will continue to build on the synergies we have with our subsidiaries and ensure that their strategies are aligned with the overall goals of IDA as a group. Our subsidiaries, IDA International, Infocomm Investments Pte Ltd (IIPL), Singapore Network Information Centre (SGNIC) and Assurity Trusted Solutions (ATS), play critical complementary roles to IDA’s work. For example, IDA International takes on the function of making Singapore’s ICT expertise, experience and innovative solutions available to public service agencies around the world, while IIPL invests in growth stage technology companies and help startups from overseas to locate engineering and other high-value activities in Singapore. As a group, we are able to leverage on one another’s expertise to achieve synergy that impacts all levels of the infocomm ecosystem, benefiting public agencies, businesses and consumers alike.

People at the heart of the organisation
Within the organisation, we maintain our emphasis on people development to ensure that we continue to attract, develop and retain talent to fulfil our mission. New human resource and learning management systems were launched to help hone our people’s capabilities and enable employees to embrace the mindset of “self-leadership”. We also initiated reviews of our competency frameworks to update the professional development roadmaps for the different divisions in IDA to keep pace with changing business needs.

As we continue to work towards our goals, I am glad to have the support and guidance of the IDA Board, whose members bring with them deep industry insights and a strong acumen in identifying the technology and business trends that matter. As for the chairpersons and members of our subsidiary Boards, their capable leadership and guidance enables our subsidiaries to play crucial complementary roles to IDA’s, for which I am grateful.

In particular, I would like to express my appreciation to Board members who have completed their term and to extend my warmest welcome to our new Board members, who bring their valuable experience and expertise as we look ahead to the future.

To the management and staff of IDA, my deepest appreciation for their dedication and efforts in the past year, and the same goes out to our industry partners for their continued support.

YONG Ying-I
Chairman, IDA