TODAY’S graduates will be living the prime of their life in a vibrant and prosperous Asia, said Temasek Holdings executive director Ho Ching yesterday.

Speaking at the graduation of Singapore Management University’s class of 2006, Ms Ho cited an OECD study that projected Asia’s share of world GDP hitting 55-60 per cent in less than 20 years. “In other words, Asia’s share of global GDP will catch up with its share of world population in another 20 years.”

She added: “The advantage of large numbers will be magnified further, as Asian governments invest in education for their people, and the growing middle class continues to invest in their children’s future.”

But hidden among the Asia advantage of billions is also “the power of one”, said Ms Ho, who is also Temasek chief executive officer.

“The statistics of large numbers hides the fact that each success story eventually boils down to the single individual creating the idea, taking the risk, making the decision, and toiling against odds to make things happen for himself or for others.”

She cited Microsoft chairman Bill Gates, who “burst forth on the cover of Fortune magazine as a young multimillionaire at the age of 30”, and the late S Rajaratnam, who joined the struggle for independence in 1955 “with nothing more than idealism and a trusty mechanical typewriter”.

Ms Ho: Sees SMU’s graduating class as having ‘a certain derring-do’