

**LAUNCH OF SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY  
MASTER OF LAWS IN JUDICIAL STUDIES PROGRAMME**

**THURSDAY 26 JULY 2018, RAFFLES CITY CONVENTION CENTRE**

**OPENING REMARKS BY  
THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE AEDIT ABDULLAH  
JUDGE, SUPREME COURT OF SINGAPORE**

Honourable Chief Justices

Heads of Delegations

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

1 It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the official launch of the Singapore Management University (SMU) Master of Laws in Judicial Studies (LLM in Judicial Studies) programme. This is the result of painstaking collaborative efforts between the SMU School of Law and the Singapore Judicial College (SJC) and I wish to congratulate both the SMU School of Law and the SJC on this momentous achievement.

2 This occasion marks a significant milestone for the SMU School of Law, the SJC and the pursuit of excellence in judicial education in general. For the first time, the SMU School of Law, which has gained an international reputation as a premier law school in Singapore, will offer higher academic learning combined with judge craft to serving judges and

those aspiring for a judicial career, alongside the SJC with this new track in its Master of Laws programme. The SJC on the other hand has established a solid expertise in training newly appointed as well as serving judges in Singapore and outside Singapore. The dedication to build on those efforts naturally found its way to partnering the SMU School of Law in this endeavour, which dovetails with its current judicial education curriculum and extends its portfolio to providing accreditation through the LLM in Judicial Studies programme.

3 The LLM in Judicial Studies programme is also a tremendous boost to judicial education, particularly for the region. In his address to ASEAN judges at the second judicial training of the then ASEAN Chief Justices Meeting, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon spoke of the “learning judge”; referring not to a “learner judge in training, but rather to one who feels duty-bound to continue to learn, educate and train himself in the pursuit of excellence and in the quest to fulfil his mission”.<sup>1</sup> The notion of a judge as an omniscient decision-maker, who requires no further training and education upon his appointment, has been displaced by rising public expectations of judges as “problem-solvers” who are to render solutions

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<sup>1</sup> Welcome Address by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon at the second ACJM Judicial Training, 23 February 2016 at [8].

appropriate to each case, making the decision-making process all the more nuanced than ever before.<sup>2</sup>

4 The LLM in Judicial Studies programme strives to keep the learning judge abreast of, if not ahead of the curve in, judicial education. The programme is deliberately pitched at a Masters level, so that candidates can benefit from the rigours of higher-learning to enhance their core legal knowledge and competencies. A unique feature of the curriculum is also the real-world judge craft that will be “taught by judges for judges”. In this regard, the programme will not only be taught by eminent SMU professors, but also experienced Singapore judges and judicial officers. Candidates can get to work closely with these judges during their attachments and while researching on their judicial dissertations. The teaching faculty will be supported by the SJC, which brings to the LLM in Judicial Studies programme its distinctive pedagogical style of instruction with a practical problem-solving focus. Enrolling in the LLM in Judicial Studies programme is a logical progression for the alumni of the SJC.

5 While it is unrealistic to expect judges to think and decide in exactly the same way, the LLM in Judicial Studies programme may go some way

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

in engendering some objective standards among judges in the decision-making process and consequently more consistent judicial decisions in the region.<sup>3</sup> The graduates of the LLM in Judicial Studies programme will also form a new and growing worldwide alumni network of judges, which will forge closer ties and promote greater cooperation among judiciaries.

6 Once again, I extend my warmest congratulations to the SMU School of Law and the SJC and wish the LLM in Judicial Studies programme every success.

Thank you.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* at [11].