



**Welcome Address by
SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer
at the SMU China Forum 2015
25th Anniversary of Sino-Singapore Diplomatic Relations:
“China’s Alternate Vision for the World?”
Monday, 16 November 2015, 9am
Mochtar Riady Auditorium, Administration Building,
Singapore Management University**

Guest of Honour, Mr Lim Swee Say, Minister for Manpower, Singapore

Mr Yu Yunfeng, Education Counsellor of China Embassy in Singapore

Keynote speakers:

- Professor Chen Zhimin, Dean, School of International Relations and Public Affairs, Fudan University
- Professor Thomas Christiansen, Jean Monnet Professor of European Institutional Politics; Co-Director of the Maastricht Centre for European Governance, Maastricht University
- Mr Jim Lai Chi Ming, Vice President, Tencent Corp

Friends from Tsinghua University, Fudan University and National Chengchi University who have just flown into Singapore to attend our forum and research workshop

Distinguished guests

Members of SMU

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning and a very warm welcome to the SMU China Forum held here at the Singapore Management University.

Organised for the third year, the SMU China Forum aims to provide business leaders, policy makers and the academia with a common platform to attain in-depth understanding and exchange on current issues and trends that are shaping China's growth critically.

We are pleased to mark at today's forum, the 25th anniversary of the Sino-Singapore diplomatic relations and partnerships. It is also a big milestone year as we celebrate Singapore's 50th year of independence, as well as SMU's 15th birthday.

As we all have just witnessed, the ties between Singapore and China have reached a new pinnacle, particularly with Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit in Singapore just over a week ago. Our Forum takes place in a most timely manner.

Undoubtedly, Singapore plays an integral role to China, the region and world, through its unique position and strategic perspectives. As we all know, Singapore was China's largest source of foreign direct investments in 2014 and 2013, and is China's second largest overseas investment destination in the first half of 2015. Singapore is the current Country-Coordinator for China-Asean relations, and has also offered an appropriate venue for the recent historic meeting between Mr Xi Jinping and Mr Ma Ying-jeou.

Singapore will continue to be an important internationalisation base for China, and we can expect multi-faceted cooperation to grow in numerous aspects. We are looking at both countries strengthening and deepening cooperation in areas such as finance, leadership, education, innovation, culture and human resources development. Both will collaborate and play pivotal roles on issues of common interest and platforms such as the United Nations, World Trade Organisation, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and Asean. There will be many more new and all-rounded partnership aspects, including those on regional and international issues.

Notably, Mr Xi said that a key factor for the development of Sino-Singapore ties is their young people, who need to understand the history and culture of both countries, and foster deeper friendship. Knowledge institutions such as SMU and the multi-sector stakeholders here today must share the same vision – that we play critical roles in nurturing youths and being changemakers who shape and transform our future.

Last year, the Forum touched on “The New Normal”. I am sure we are all marvelling at how fast transformation and progress have been.

This year, we will focus on the theme “China’s Alternate Vision for the World?”, discussing how both countries can leverage the strong relations and distinct advantages to contribute to the “One Belt, One Road” initiative and the “Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation” strategy in the next phase of economic partnership and developments that will boost and influence global trade.

We are very honoured to have **Mr Lim Swee Say, Singapore’s Minister for Manpower as our Guest of Honour** today, and I’m sure we are all very excited to hear his insights. We have gathered distinguished experts from the government, business and academic sectors here to exchange views on these current hot topics in the global economy.

With Mr Xi’s announcement of the third Sino-Singapore government-to-government (G-to-G) project in Chongqing, SMU aims to contribute to the third G-to-G project by working with Chinese university partners and industry partners in relevant applied research and talent development. SMU has strengths and capabilities to contribute to the four priority areas of collaboration in Chongqing -- financial services, aviation, transport and logistics, and information and communication technology.

SMU’s long-term strategy in China is based on four priorities:

1. Raising the profile and reputation of SMU in China to internationalise SMU
2. Improving the quality of student-intake from China for SMU’s undergraduate, postgraduates and executive programmes
3. Increasing and broadening the engagement of faculty members in common research and PhD co-supervision with their counterparts at leading Chinese universities
4. Engaging students through global exposure programmes such as student exchange and internships in China

SMU has been organising multiple large-scale China-related forums both in Singapore and China every year since late 2012, when we first formed SMU's China Initiatives. Besides the annual SMU China Forum, we have also jointly organised global forums with Fudan, Tsinghua and Xinhuanet.

In China, we have established a PhD scholarship partnership with the China Scholarship Council (CSC), set up the SMU-Fudan Joint Research Centre in Development Studies, and together with the Shanghai Jiao Tong University set up the SMU-SJTU Joint Centre for Quantitative Economics and Finance.

SMU's Master of Science in Applied Finance (MAF) programme, which we offer in China with our longstanding partner Xiamen University, has been ranked 2nd in Asia by FT Global Masters in Finance Pre-experience Ranking 2015. Recently, SMU's Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) programme was the highest-ranked new entrant in the FT EMBA Ranking 2015, ranking 10th in Asia and 36th in the world.

In China, we have launched the Peking University-SMU Masters of IT in Business (MITB) Dual Degree Programme and the Tsinghua University-SMU Masters of Science in CFO Leadership (MCFO) Dual Degree Programme. We are currently finalising a Dual-Masters degree partnership in MAF with a leading Chinese university partner to contribute talents to the "One Belt, One Road" initiative that includes the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

On industry partnerships, we have collaborated with Huawei to conduct research on Information Security and Trust, and with Ping An Technology to establish Pinnacle, a research lab focusing on Big Data.

In youth entrepreneurial development, we have held the SMU-Peeli Rural Entrepreneurship Programme, and the Asian Youth Entrepreneurship Programme which involves students from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

In the interest of time, I can only cite just some of the examples and highlights of SMU's China projects. In summary, our strategic collaborations and relationships in the last three years have advanced tremendously. We have made significant progress in strengthening our expertise in China, and serving as a knowledge partner and platform for numerous Chinese entities and joint work. SMU now partners Chinese institutions as well as enterprises to offer study or internship exchange and even community service opportunities in China for students. We are also looking forward to doing even more research and leadership development for faculty and industry.

Clearly, our links and ties have grown from strength to strength, and the pace of collaboration and interaction will accelerate even more. SMU aims to contribute to the Singapore-China bilateral cooperation, by building and nurturing China-ready and bicultural graduates, and engaging in top-notch China-related research projects. And we hope to achieve excellence in these through innovative and different ways, because it has always been part of our University's DNA to be so.

We look forward to sharing our expertise and insights with the Chinese and global audience, and to being a catalyst in driving thought leadership through the SMU China Forum.

I wish you all a most intellectually-stimulating and fruitful Forum.

Thank you.