



**Welcome Address by
SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer
at the Xinhuanet “Thinker” Global Forum
*“25th Anniversary of Sino-Singapore Diplomatic Relations:
Economic Cooperation and Opportunities”*
Thursday, 12 February 2015, 8.35am
Mochtar Riady Auditorium, Administration Building,
Singapore Management University**

Mr Ding Qilin, Chief Representative of Xinhua News Agency Singapore

Mr Wu Lei, General Manager of Xinhuanet Singapore

Keynote speakers:

- Professor Zheng Yongnian, Director of East Asian Institute
- Ms Guo Ningning, President of Bank of China Singapore Branch

Distinguished panellists and guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning and a very warm welcome to the Xinhuanet “Thinker” Global Forum held here at the Singapore Management University.

We are pleased to mark at today’s forum, the 25th anniversary of the Sino-Singapore diplomatic relations and partnerships. As we all have witnessed, the collaborations between both countries have leaped and grown tremendously in the last 25 years.

Just looking at numbers, the Sino-Singapore trade has increased by more than 20 times in just a quarter of a century, rising from US\$4.2 billion to US\$92 billion. At the same time, Singapore became China's top foreign investor country. Based on 2013 figures, Singapore has become China’s top foreign direct investment source with some US\$7.33 billion invested. Singapore is also China’s No. 11 trading partner with US\$7.31 billion in trade, whereas China is Singapore's largest trading partner.

There have been several successful Sino-Singapore national projects, including the China-Singapore Suzhou Industrial Park and Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City. The third project, the Western Region Project (WRP), is currently under discussion.

Clearly, our links and ties go beyond the trade figures. China and Singapore are strengthening partnership in sustainable development, culture and economic transformation. The Sino-Singapore partnership is growing from strength to strength unquestionably.

SMU sees ourselves as a key strategic national asset to Singapore and aims to contribute in strengthening the Sino-Singapore partnership. Since establishing SMU's China Initiatives at the end of 2012 to drive thought leadership that will mutually benefit Singapore and China, our long-term strategy in China has consisted of four priorities:

First, we want to raise the international profile and reputation of SMU in China. This is part of our overall strategy to build the SMU brand internationally.

Second, we aim to improve the quality of students-intake from China for SMU's undergraduate, postgraduates and executive programmes.

Third, we want to increase and broaden the engagement of faculty members in common research and PhD co-supervision with their counterparts at leading Chinese universities.

Our fourth priority is to enhance our student exchange programmes and internships in China for SMU students.

I would also like to share some highlights of SMU's China projects:

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

In terms of postgraduate programmes, we have launched the Peking-SMU Masters of IT in Business (MITB) Dual Degree Programme and the Tsinghua-SMU Masters of Science in CFO Leadership (MCFO) Dual Degree Programme.

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.

SMU has partnered Xinhuanet on a series of China-related forums held in China in April 2014, including the SMU-Tsinghua Global Forum in Beijing, and SMU-Fudan Global Forum in Shanghai. We also worked together on forums in Singapore including the SMU China Forum on the “New Normal” held in November 2014. I would like to invite all of you to join us at the upcoming SMU China Forum to be held here in SMU on 16 November later this year.

I would also take this opportunity to congratulate Xinhuanet on launching the "Thinker" series, which has active contributions from eminent thought leaders such as Tsinghua University School of Economics and Management's Professor Li Daokui, who is known as one of the most influential economists in China; Peking University's Honorary Dean of the National School of Development Professor Justin Lin, who was former Chief Economist and Senior Vice President of the World Bank; Alibaba Group's Founder and Executive Chairman Jack Ma, who needs no further introduction; and Tencent's CEO and Founder “Pony” Ma Huateng, who also created one of China's largest internet companies, with WeChat and QQ.

Here at SMU, we have five Areas of Excellence underpinning our research:

- Analytics for Business, Consumer & Social Insights
- Economics of Ageing & Healthcare Management
- Finance and Financial Markets
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Urban Management & Sustainability

We look forward to sharing our expertise and insights with the global Chinese audience through the Xinhuanet Thinker platform, and many future China initiatives.

Thank you.