

**Speech by SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer
at the Launch of the Urban Computing and
Engineering Centre of Excellence
by A*STAR, Fujitsu Limited and
Singapore Management University
at Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)
11.15am, Wednesday, 15 October 2014**

Mr Lim Chuan Poh, Chairman, A*STAR

Mr Tango Matsumoto, Corporate Executive Officer, EVP, and Head
of Global Marketing, Fujitsu Limited

Mr Tatsuya Tanaka, Corporate Senior Vice President, Head of Asia
Region, Fujitsu Limited

Mr Mitsutoshi Hirono, Corporate Executive Officer, SVP, Head of
Innovative Business Unit, Global Marketing

Mr Suresh Sachi, Deputy Managing Director, A*STAR

Friends and colleagues

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning.

It gives me great pleasure today to join you at this joyous and momentous event to mark the launch of the Urban Computing and Engineering Centre of Excellence by A*STAR, Fujitsu and SMU. We are proud to be the university partner in this three-way partnership between the government, the private sector, and the university.

The trends of increasing urbanisation brings about a myriad of social and urban management challenges in parallel with providing

economic opportunities for people across the world. For example, higher urban density increases the load on public facilities and services, such as transport networks and public gathering places and event venues. This makes it more challenging to manage the everyday flows of traffic and people, especially when there are surges in mobility flows associated with special events, peak demand periods, or variabilities associated with weather or other unplanned disruptions. Similar types of challenges associated with flow management impact maritime and port operations. This is also related to urban congestion management, as freight from most ports moves from the port into the city, and this movement contributes to urban traffic and congestion.

Urban mobility planners, and those responsible for maritime and port operations, have to cope with these flow management issues given the real-world constraints of public sector budget limitations, public pressure for near term improvement, and many space-related limitations on the extent to which the physical infrastructure can be changed over the longer term. As such, we must find better ways of working within the current constraints of budget, time and physical space. That implies we must find ways where intelligence -- enabled through advanced computation together with analytics, optimization, simulation, and computational social science -- makes it possible for our society to make better use of our existing resources for managing mobility and flow in our urban centres, as well as in our maritime and port operations. This is crucial to achieving sustainable urban growth and global development.

For this reason, we are pleased and proud to be part of this ASTAR-Fujitsu-SMU Centre of Excellence that will focus on addressing these challenges.

In preparation for this Centre of Excellence, and also in response to other urban management work taking place across the university, SMU has elevated our work in Urban Management & Sustainability to be one of our five Areas of Excellence, where we adopt interdisciplinary approaches to solve multi-faceted challenges faced

by society. In addition to our work on urban mobility, which includes the movement of people, goods, and raw materials, we look at managing the movement of urban recyclables and waste. We also have a cluster of work aimed at improving urban operations through the use of intelligent systems for planning, scheduling and response management, and we are applying this to various urban resource management challenges, such as those associated with emergency response, safety and security.

While our efforts in Urban Management & Sustainability involve several of our SMU schools across the university, these efforts have been spearheaded by our School of Information Systems, or SIS. SIS has also played the lead role in building up one of our other Areas of Excellence for which we are especially well known, and it is the Analytics for Business, Consumer and Social Insights. We see great potential for work at the intersection of these two Areas of Excellence, and we look forward to working with ASTAR and Fujitsu to realise this potential.

I would like to specially acknowledge the role of Singapore's National Research Foundation in today's event. SMU's ability to contribute to and be part of this ASTAR-Fujitsu-SMU Centre of Excellence is largely enabled through NRF's award to SMU for a joint Fujitsu-SMU Corporate Lab on our campus through their Corp Lab @ University scheme. This lab, known as Urban Computing and Engineering Corporate Lab @ SMU, will be housed on the 4th floor of the new SMU Labs facility at the corner of Armenian Street and Stamford Road.

Students are central to the life of a university. Obviously our faculty members will be involved with the work of the Corporate Lab and the Centre of Excellence. But equally, our SMU Masters and PhD students, and even some of our undergraduate students, will participate in the projects. This combined effort of the ASTAR-Fujitsu-SMU Centre of Excellence and the NRF-supported Corporate Lab opens up a new world of opportunities for SMU post-graduate and undergraduate students to work with the excellent

researchers from A*STAR and Fujitsu on innovative solutions to urban challenges.

This collaboration with A*STAR and Fujitsu will enhance SMU's role in making a positive impact on society by making significant contributions to improving the quality of life of city dwellers. By working together with A*STAR and Fujitsu, we further strengthen our well-known expertise to make sense of data at scale with analytics, to use data to better understand, model and predict human behaviour, and to create intelligent decision-making support tools for urban and maritime-related resource planning and allocation.

In closing, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to A*STAR Chairman Lim Chuan Poh for gracing the occasion today. I would also like to express, once again, our appreciation to NRF for your tremendous support in setting up the Corporate Lab@ SMU. We look forward to a most fruitful collaboration with our partners, A*STAR and Fujitsu, in developing practical and sustainable solutions to the urban challenges of today and beyond.

Thank you.