

**Speech by Professor Lily Kong**  
**President, Singapore Management University**  
**At the Memorandum of Intent Signing Ceremony**  
**Between SMU and Vingroup**  
**Friday, 16 August 2019, 2:00pm to 4:00pm**

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**WELCOME**

Her Excellency Ambassador Tao Thi Thanh Huong

Vice-Chairwoman of Vingroup, Madam Le Mai Lan

Distinguished guests, faculty, staff and students of SMU, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

On behalf of the Singapore Management University, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you, in particular our esteemed guests from Vietnam.

**SMU AND VIETNAM**

SMU has always been keen to foster closer ties with like-minded partners in Vietnam, and we have stepped up our efforts in recent years in our engagement with Vietnam. Let me share a few examples.

In our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, SMU has a steady intake of Vietnamese students who have added diversity and vibrancy to our campus. To date, more than 240 Vietnamese students have graduated from SMU.

As you all know, SMU undergraduate students have to fulfil 80 hours of community service as a graduation requirement. Over the years, SMU students have participated in several overseas community service projects in Vietnam, in partnership with the local communities. These projects entail, among other things, the teaching of English to the local children, raising their awareness about environmental conservation, and imparting public speaking skills.

In case writing, SMU's Centre for Management Practice has written several case studies about Vietnam since 2012, and conducted business case writing workshops with a partner university in Vietnam.

In December 2017, SMU formally established the International Advisory Council in Vietnam to strengthen and deepen our collaboration and engagement with the government, academic and business communities in the country. This is part of our overall efforts to build SMU's international reputation as a premier university in Asia. We are privileged to have Madam Le Mai Lan as a member of our Council in Vietnam. Madame Le has provided useful advice and guidance on how SMU could further develop our engagement with Vietnam, which we appreciate very much. Thank you, Madame Le.

## **RECENT COLLABORATIONS WITH VINGROUP**

Our partnership with Vingroup started in 2017, when a team from SMU Executive Development collaborated with Vingroup to design customised and experiential programmes to help develop human capital for the Group, while delivering on the Group's business goals.

The partnership has benefitted about 100 Vingroup employees. I am delighted to learn that SMU's innovative curriculum, distinguished teaching and practice excellence have made a meaningful impact on each participant.

Then on 18 October last year, SMU and Vingroup signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Hanoi to collaborate on research and development, capacity building, as well as executive and professional development programmes.

### **VINGROUP YOUNG TALENT SCHOLARSHIP**

Today, we are here to mark another milestone in our growing partnership between SMU and Vingroup. SMU is pleased and grateful to sign a Memorandum of Intent to receive a gift of \$10 million from Vingroup. This will establish the Vingroup Young Talent Scholarship at SMU.

The gift will provide for up to twelve scholarships each year, for the next five years. These scholarships will benefit Vietnamese students who are enrolled into SMU's postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes in the field of computing.

Scholars who have demonstrated a desire to excel in research will enjoy a nurturing environment in SMU that provides world-class, rigorous training in computing research.

Computing professionals looking to upskill themselves will benefit from SMU's postgraduate professional programmes which are widely recognised for the ability to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and its application in business settings.

This gift demonstrates Vingroup's foresight to invest in computing talent from Vietnam by developing their skills and capabilities. Upon graduation from SMU, I am sure their expertise will be in demand as Vietnam is fast becoming one of the world's leading technology services providers.

This gift is especially significant to SMU as it is the first time that our School of Information Systems' postgraduate programmes have received a gift of such a substantial amount. This

gift is a strong testament of the confidence Vingroup has in our programmes. It is also the first time that a scholarship programme has been made available solely to postgraduate Vietnamese students studying in SMU.

## **CLOSING**

In closing, I would like to once again express our heartfelt appreciation to Vingroup for your generosity, and for sharing our vision of creating a better world through SMU's transformative education. I would also like to thank our honoured guests, Ambassador Tao and Madam Le, for taking time out of their schedules to grace this event today. We look forward to a long-lasting and fulfilling partnership with Vingroup. Thank you.

**- End -**