

**Welcome Address by SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer
at SMU China Forum on
'The Next Phase of Economic Reform: The New Normal'
26 November 2014, Wednesday, 9.00am
Mochtar Riady Auditorium, Level 5, Administration Building
Singapore Management University**

Mr Yu Yunfeng, Counsellor (Education), China Embassy in Singapore

Keynote speakers:

- Professor Jia Qingguo from Peking University;
- Professor Yuan Zhigang and Professor Sun Xiaoxia from Fudan University

Panel members,

Faculty, staff and students of SMU

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning and a very warm welcome to the SMU China Forum 2014.

This is the second year that we are organising the SMU China Forum. The China Forum Series is held annually to provide business leaders, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and the academia with a more comprehensive and integrated understanding of some of the influences and trends that are shaping China's growth and development. It aims to enable participants of the forum to share, discuss and debate ideas and issues about China that are current and relevant.

China Forum theme

The theme of this year's forum is *'The Next Phase of Economic Reform: The New Normal'*.

As we all know, growth in China decelerated to 7.7 percent in 2012 and 2013. In the third quarter of this year, China's GDP grew by 7.3 percent, its slowest in five years, down from the 7.5 percent in the second quarter. Growth was dragged down by a housing slowdown, softening domestic demand, and unsteady exports, fuelling concerns that China could miss its annual growth target of about 7.5 percent.

In May this year, China's President Xi Jinping had spoken of the need to adapt to a "new normal" during his inspection tour in central China's Henan Province. Chinese authorities have also, for some time now, indicated that lower growth is the "new normal" as policy-makers carry out long-awaited economic reforms and adjust from an economic growth model reliant on investment to one supported by consumption and higher productivity, which in the short run will weaken growth performance.

In his address to over 1,500 business leaders at the APEC CEO Summit earlier this month, President Xi had sought to assuage concerns of an economic hard landing by the world's second largest economy. He said that under the "new normal" conditions, China's economic growth has become more stable and been driven by more diverse forces. The Chinese economic structure has been improved and upgraded, and the Chinese government has vigorously streamlined administration and delegated power, further unleashing market vitality. He added that urbanisation, agricultural modernisation, better use of technology and new approaches to macroeconomic management would help relieve "growing pains" as the economy restructures.

Faced with this new reality of a China growing more slowly, what challenges would it face, not just economically, but also socially and even politically? Would China be able to transition successfully to a new model of economic development? And how should countries in Asia, and indeed the world, respond and react?

To share their valuable research and insights into these issues and more, we have with us today a stellar line-up of scholars and thought leaders. The topics they will discuss range from international challenges as China enters a new phase of economic reform, China's financial reform, the internationalisation of RMB, the rule

of law in China, which was the focus of the Fourth Plenary Session held last month, and the challenges under China's 'new normal' conditions.

SMU China Initiatives

This Forum is an integral part of SMU's China Initiatives which was established in the second quarter of 2012. The SMU China Initiatives aims to raise our profile in China as a research university in the broad field of social sciences. By doing so, we want to contribute to the Singapore-China collaboration in business, government and civic society by nurturing China-ready and cross-cultural graduates who are able to function effectively in the business and financial environment in China. The other major undertaking of the SMU China Initiatives is to actively drive and strengthen our collaboration with existing and new partner universities in research and postgraduate education. Our aim is to play a key role in creating and sharing knowledge and thought leadership that will benefit both Singapore and China.

Our China Strategy

SMU's long-term strategy in China consists of four priorities:

First, and as I mentioned already, we want to raise the profile and reputation of SMU in China. This is part of our overall strategy to build the SMU brand and image internationally. We have strong collaborations in Europe and the US, and have started moving into China, India and ASEAN. In fact, SMU started our engagement with China back in 2007 when our Lee Kong Chian School of Business began collaborating with Xiamen University on a Master of Applied Finance China programme. By raising our profile in China, SMU hopes to continue to attract high quality Chinese faculty and postgraduate students to undertake teaching, research and learning in a holistic environment at SMU.

Second, we aim to improve the quality of students from China admitted into SMU's undergraduate, postgraduate and executive programmes.

Third, we want to broaden the engagement between SMU faculty members and their counterparts at leading Chinese universities in joint research and PhD co-supervision. This is part of our strategic goal of developing SMU as an Asian

Knowledge Hub. Our emphasis is on generating rigorous, high-impact, cross-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance, SMU is therefore constantly looking for opportunities to deepen the creation and transmission of knowledge by working with like-minded partners, including our counterparts in China.

Our fourth priority is to enhance student exchange programmes and internships in China for SMU students. At SMU, one of the ways we promote multicultural learning is by giving our students global exposure. We believe this will help broaden our students' view of the world, and develop their cross-cultural knowledge and competencies which are critical in the world we live in. As many of you will already know, our aim is to have 100% of our students experience some form of global exposure. This year's graduating cohort registered a participation rate of 86%. China, which has a number of leading universities and numerous world-renowned companies, will be invaluable in enhancing our students' learning experiences and broadening their understanding of the country.

Strengthening Collaborations

SMU has established strong collaborations with leading Chinese institutions across research, undergraduate programmes, postgraduate programmes, and training & development. Let me share some examples of the various initiatives and efforts we have accomplished this year.

(a) SMU Global Forum Series

In April, we launched the SMU Global Forum Series to provide a high-level dialogue platform for leaders from the business, government and academic communities to discuss and debate the key challenges and opportunities arising from China's development, as well as to share Singapore's experiences in transforming its economy and building a harmonious society.

The inaugural forums were co-organised with Fudan University which focused on Development and Governance issues, and with Tsinghua University, which discussed China's urbanisation drive. Last month, we co-organised a forum with

Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in Chengdu to share the perspectives from China and Singapore on managing economic transitions.

(b) Partnerships with universities

Second, we continue to foster close co-operation with like-minded universities in China.

For instance, SMU and Tsinghua University have agreed to establish the double Master degree partnership in Masters in CFO Leadership. Recruitment of students will commence early next year.

Last month, our School of Information Systems and Northeastern University in Liaoning signed an agreement to offer a fast track programme to promising undergraduates from Northeastern University to graduate with a Bachelor of Engineering degree from NEU and a Master of Applied Information Systems degree from SMU within five years.

Research workshops with Tsinghua, Fudan and Southwestern University have been organised to facilitate faculty networking and interdisciplinary research.

In July, SMU and Shanghai Jiaotong University organized the inaugural Econometrics Conference in Shanghai.

(c) Partnerships with industries

Third, SMU recognise the value and importance of having close links with industries. We have established ties with Singapore Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China or SingCham, and invited a number of CEOs from renowned companies in Singapore and China to participate in our various Global Forums in China.

We have also engaged industry leaders for research collaboration, such as Alibaba, Bank of China, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, as well as Ping Ann Banking and Insurance.

This afternoon, we will be signing a Letter of Intent with the China Enterprise Association in Singapore to promote collaboration in research, education and related activities.

(d) Strengthening ties with governments

Fourth, we continue to strengthen our ties with governments.

SMU has been included in the China Scholarship Council's list of partners. Our university will be providing scholarships to high quality PhD candidates from China to undergo PhD co-supervision programmes at SMU and to pursue SMU PhD programmes.

We have also hosted several visits by senior Chinese officials. As I mentioned earlier, our School of Information Systems and Northeastern University signed an agreement for a fast track programme. This took place at the 8th Singapore-Liaoning Economic and Trade Council Meeting on 28th October, which was witnessed by Singapore Minister Tan Chuan-Jin and Liaoning Vice Governor Bing Zhigang. Vice Governor Bing visited SMU on the same day of the signing to better understand SMU's strengths and competencies.

Just two weeks ago, SMU hosted a visit by Mr Xiao Huaiyuan, Chairman of the Standing Committee of Tianjin Municipal People's Congress. Mr Xiao's visit to SMU was to better understand the research we conduct in the areas of urban computing & analytics, ageing, and unmet social needs.

Conclusion

What I have just shared demonstrates a commitment by SMU to broaden and deepen our ties with China to encompass more areas of collaboration. We believe this will help contribute to knowledge creation and talent development for both Singapore and China.

On behalf of SMU, I would like to thank the keynote speakers and panel members for taking the time from their busy schedules to join us this morning in their strong support of SMU's efforts.

It leaves me to wish you all a good and interesting conference.

Thank you.