

**Opening Remarks by SMU President Professor Lily
Kong at the media conference for the launch of SMU
Overseas Centre Jakarta (OCJ)**

**Grand Hyatt Jakarta
Tuesday, 6 December 2022**

Friends from the media

Good evening. I am very glad to have you here with our team today as we announce the opening of SMU's first overseas centre. This is part of our intention to establish a network of overseas centres in the region over the next several years. We have chosen to start with Jakarta, and I will explain why later.

Let me first situate the establishment of SMU's overseas centres within the context of our strategic plan. Launched in 2020, we identified three strategic priorities to further build our education, research and engagement work, focusing our entire institutional energies and expertise on these areas. These are: Digital Transformation, Sustainable Living, and Growth in Asia.

In line with the "Growth in Asia" strategic priority, we have identified the establishment of a network of overseas centres as an important step towards strengthening collaborations, enabling deeper cross-cultural understanding, and collectively contributing to the growth of the region. The overseas centres will allow SMU to drive deeper engagement with our trusted partners to successfully make meaningful impact on communities in different parts of Asia.

We chose Jakarta to launch our very first overseas centre for three primary reasons:

First, looking ahead, Indonesia is Southeast Asia's largest economy and a rising regional economic powerhouse. It wields considerable influence over the future of the region. Establishing our overseas centre right here allows us to be where a lot of the

action is, to participate meaningfully in and contribute to the growth story here in Indonesia.

Second, while looking into the future, we do not forget to look back. Indonesia and Singapore are long-standing bilateral partners, with whom we have excellent relations. Indonesia has been a close partner to SMU ever since our early days as an educational institution 22 years ago. Throughout the years, our university has played host to exceptional and talented students and faculty members from Indonesia, who have contributed to the growth of our university. We remember with gratitude the good partnerships we have had, and hope we can continue to strengthen this relationship and expand the opportunities for collaboration with the help of our Overseas Centre Jakarta or OCJ.

Third, we value greatly our International Advisory Council (IAC) for Indonesia, established in 2018, comprising esteemed industry leaders from the country. With the help of the IAC Indonesia, SMU has strengthened our relationships in Indonesia. The OCJ is a natural extension of our growing ties and a signal of our strong commitment to working with Indonesia. By establishing a local presence, we hope to further enable the cultivation and building of strong partnerships in Indonesia.

What will SMU's OCJ actually do?

At a broad level, it will seek to deepen existing partnerships and collaborations while forming new ones with local academic institutions, businesses, and government agencies. These collaborations will facilitate student mobility, upskill local capabilities, and facilitate knowledge exchange.

First, student mobility is so important to extend the horizon of learning for both Singaporean and Indonesian students. It contributes to better cross-cultural understanding, and opens the eyes and hearts of young people to other ways of doing things, extending new experiences that stay with them for life. OCJ will facilitate these movements.

Second, OCJ will also contribute to efforts to upskill local capabilities in Indonesia, by

seeking to understand better talent and skills development needs, thereby helping SMU to contribute to upskilling and reskilling efforts in Indonesia in targeted and relevant ways.

Third, OCJ will host dialogues and other events to facilitate knowledge sharing and develop regular dialogues across the public and private sectors and with academia. These could be public events or closed-door events, and will aim to bring cutting-edge research and expertise in areas such as sustainability and digital transformation to support local communities' social and economic development. In these ways, we hope to work with local education and industry partners to support Indonesia's transition to a green economy and a digital economy.

While we are officially launching SMU's OCJ today and look forward to it delivering on its goals, we will be starting with a number of already established relationships that give us every confidence that we are on a positive trajectory.

In terms of collaborations with universities, SMU had earlier signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for academic collaboration with three leading Indonesian universities: Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Universitas Indonesia (UI), and Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB). Through these collaborations, SMU has been able to implement exchange and study programmes, faculty study missions, and develop joint SMU-X overseas courses, which are experiential learning modules in which students collaborate with the public and private sectors to solve real-world problems.

SMU has also been involved in adult continuing education. Government officials, executives from Indonesian State-Owned Enterprises, and multi-level leaders from the private sector are among those who have attended executive and other skills development programmes with SMU. The Asian Financial Leaders Programme (AFLP) for C-suite executives, the Executive Leadership Programme with Bank Indonesia and Bank Negara, and the Emtek EAGLE Programme with the Emtek Group are just a few examples.

We have also offered, and will continue to offer, opportunities for Indonesian citizens to pursue undergraduate studies, as well as postgraduate studies at SMU, with

scholarships and grant opportunities for eligible applicants. We do hope to be able to extend SMU's unique brand of holistic and transformative education to a broader base of deserving Indonesians.

To conclude, we believe that SMU, with the help of its OCJ, together with our partners, can make a significant contribution to Indonesia's social and economic development, while deepening the understanding, collaboration and trust, between our two countries.

I shall now invite Centre Director of SMU Overseas Centre Jakarta. Mr Shoeb Z Kagda, to give more details about the Centre.

Thank you.