



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **SMU holds inaugural Industry Leaders Dialogue in Myanmar to discuss capacity building for the rapidly-developing country**

#### ***International Advisory Council launched to foster and deepen SMU's engagement with Myanmar***

**Yangon, 6 July 2017 (Thursday)** – Singapore Management University (SMU) has today organised its inaugural Industry Leaders Dialogue in Myanmar to discuss the role of higher education and human capital development to support Myanmar's rapid growth and transformation. SMU also launched its International Advisory Council in Myanmar to establish, strengthen and deepen SMU's collaboration and engagement with the government, academic and business communities in the country.

About 180 business, government and academic leaders from Myanmar, SMU senior management and SMU alumni in Myanmar, were present at the event which was held at Novotel Yangon Max. The Guest-of-Honour was Mr Koh Chee Chian, Deputy Chief of Mission, Singapore Embassy in Yangon.

SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer delivered the keynote address on 'The Role of Higher Education in Emerging Economies'. This was followed by a dialogue with Mr Serge Pun, Founder and Chairman of Serge Pun & Associates on 'Leading the New Economy' which was moderated by Professor Tan Chin Tiong, Senior Advisor to SMU President.

Professor Philip Charles Zerrillo, Executive Director of SMU Centre for Management Practice then spoke about 'Investing in a Frontier Economy'. Professor Zerrillo moderated a panel discussion on 'Addressing the Skills Gap in Myanmar'. The panel members were Dr Ko Ko Gyi, Group Managing Director of Capital Diamond Star Group Co. Ltd; Mr Jonathan Kyaw Thaung, Group CEO of KT Group; Ms Meimei Chua, Managing Director of United Beauty Palace Myanmar Co. Ltd; and Mr Ronald Lee, Project Director of City Mart Holdings Co. Ltd.

SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer said, "Over the last few years, Myanmar has made significant progress as a result of its reforms, which have boosted economic growth and brought political stability to the country. Its leaders are making great efforts to raise the education standards, including the training of skilled labour, to meet industry demands arising from its rapid development.

"This Industry Leaders Dialogue is therefore timely and forms an integral part of SMU's overall efforts to deepen our understanding and collaboration with Myanmar. The Dialogue serves as a platform for industry leaders, academia and other stakeholders to share, discuss and debate ideas and issues about Myanmar that are current and relevant.

“In addition to the Industry Leaders Dialogue, we have also established the International Advisory Council made up of prominent and esteemed business leaders from Myanmar. We look forward to having their advice and guidance to further develop our engagement with Myanmar.

“Singapore and Myanmar enjoy long-standing relations which continues to flourish, as can be seen in the strong economic ties and growing trade and investment in Myanmar. Links between the two countries' people are also strong and growing. SMU wants to contribute to the close collaboration in business, government and civic society between both countries by providing more opportunities for exchange and internships, strengthen our collaboration with partner universities in Myanmar in research and postgraduate education, and foster more industry tie-ups with the private sector. We believe these will help contribute to knowledge creation and talent development for both Singapore and Myanmar.”

SMU's International Advisory Council in Myanmar comprises the following members:

- 1) Mr Serge Pun, Founder and Chairman, Serge Pun and Associates (Chairperson)
- 2) Mr Jonathan Kyaw Thaug, Group CEO, KT Group
- 3) Ms Nang Lang Kham, Executive Director, KBZ Bank
- 4) Mr Naing Ye Lin\*, President of SMU Alumni Chapter in Myanmar
- 5) Ms Meimei Chua\*, Managing Director, United Beauty Palace Myanmar
- 6) Ms Kyi Kyi Win\*, Director, Diamond Great Wall Trading Co Ltd
- 7) Mr Ronald Lee\*, Project Director, City Mart Holding Co Ltd

*\* denotes SMU alumni*

The role of the SMU International Advisory Council is to collaborate with and involve friends of SMU and its alumni to reach out to corporates and grow the friends of the SMU community in overseas countries. The Council will provide platforms for active engagements between SMU's overseas alumni, international students, and the local business community and academia.

The members of the SMU International Advisory Council (Myanmar), in their roles as ambassadors of the university, will lend support to SMU's activities in Myanmar. These activities will include dialogues and panel discussions to raise awareness of SMU's thought leadership and our areas of excellence, as well as alumni showcase/gatherings and networking sessions. The members may be invited to be panelists, or nominate and help to invite suitable persons to participate in such dialogues and discussions or networking sessions.

In the last few years, SMU has steadily increased its engagement with Myanmar. This include SMU students participating in study mission trips and overseas community service projects in Myanmar. Other examples are:

- 2013: the SMU Alumni Chapter in Yangon, Myanmar was established to maintain strong linkages between the growing SMU alumni in Myanmar with other stakeholders in the SMU community. The Chapter currently has 100 registered members.
- 2014: SMU School of Law and National University of Singapore Faculty of Law signed two MOUs on Cooperation in Legal Education with the University of Yangon Department of Law and the University of Mandalay Department of Law, respectively.
- 2015: SMU's Centre for Management Practice conducted business case writing and case teaching workshop at the National Management College in Yangon.

- 2016: SMU's Business Families Institute organised a Business Families Learning Journey to Myanmar to better understand the business and investment opportunities in Yangon and Mandalay.
- 2017: SMU's Centre for Management Practice published a case study on "Unilever's Lifebuoy in Myanmar: Soap Suds for Social Good?".
- 2017: SMU's Business Families Institute and Deloitte Southeast Asia published a case study on Myanmar's business family – KBZ Group of Companies.

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**For more information, please contact**

Teo Chang Ching  
Senior Assistant Director  
Office of Corporate Communications and Marketing  
DID: (65) 6828 0451  
Email: ccteo@smu.edu.sg

**About Singapore Management University**

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning, and for its technologically enabled pedagogy of seminar-style teaching in small class sizes.

Home to around 10,000 undergraduate, postgraduate, executive and professional, full- and part-time students, SMU is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in interdisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU has an emphasis on generating rigorous, high-impact, and relevant multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities from USA, Europe, China and India, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector, through its research institutes, centres and labs. SMU's city campus is a state-of-the art facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community.