SPEECH

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SPEECH BY PROFESSOR PAN TSO-CHIEN, DEAN, SCHOOL OF CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING, AT THE MOU SIGNING CEREMONY BETWEEN NTU AND MPA IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE JOINT MPA-NTU-NUS MARITIME INDUSTRY SEMINAR HELD ON 28 JULY 2005

Brigadier General Tay Lim Heng, Chief Executive, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore,
Professor Tony Woo, Vice President (Research), NTU,
Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, President, SIM University,
Distinguished Guests,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Welcome to NTU.

I am very pleased to be here this afternoon to witness the signing of MOU between NTU and MPA, and to participate in the second joint MPA-NTU-NUS Maritime Industry Seminar.
This time last year, Prof Su Guaning, NTU President, launched the BSc and MSc (Maritime Studies) in NTU. In Prof Su’s speech, he commented on the vibrant maritime industry and noted that the remaking of the maritime industry was in progress. The outlook of the maritime sector is positive.

Singapore is already well positioned as a leader in shipping and port business. Singapore’s marine and offshore engineering sector is also well-known for its ship repair and conversion, and offshore rigs and platforms. The outlook for the country’s maritime industry is stronger than ever. According to EDB’s statistics, Singapore is ranked the second most competitive globally after the USA, and the 5th best offshore location globally.

Singapore’s richest and most valuable resource is her highly skilled and well-educated workforce. This is evident in the many acclaimed achievements that are built upon the strong team of talented workforce. Among the many achievements are “Made-in Singapore” products that include: 70% of world market share in floating production supply off-loading (FPSO) conversion; 60% in offshore oil rigs; 50% in fast ferry (up to 50 m); 35% in in-flight galley equipment; 30% in hard-disk drive; 30% in hearing aids; 25% in retailed POS-impact printers; 20% in ship repair, and others (EDB, March 2005)

To sustain these achievements requires constant induction of new bloods into the relevant industries. The maritime industry sector is facing perhaps the most acute challenge of attracting young Singaporeans into its fold. It is our duty as educator and trainer to introduce the younger generations into the exciting field of maritime industry. Together with the maritime industry
partners, NTU has been paving the way for the young talents to enter the maritime sectors as engineers, managers, scientists and researchers.

6 Today, as part of the promotional effort to introduce our undergraduates to the maritime industry, MPA is giving out awards to NTU’s engineering undergraduates on industrial attachment and business undergraduates on professional attachment in maritime-related companies. In addition, 10 of the Maritime Innovative Idea Prizes will be awarded today. I am happy to note that the recipients of these awards come from different disciplines in NTU, ranging from engineering to business and accountancy.

7 NTU also recognises that research and development relevant to the industry is key to the advancement of the university, and the industry alike. The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore and NTU signed an MOU related to co-operation in research and development in 1996. Many collaborative projects have been carried out since then, and culminated with the formal setting up of the MPA-NTU Maritime Research Centre (MRC) at NTU in 2001, to further enhance joint MPA-NTU collaboration. In 2003, MPA provided a $4M grant for NTU to host a Maritime Professorship in Shipping Management. In 2004, we saw the establishment of Singapore’s first BSc and MSc Degree Programmes in Maritime Studies at NTU, much to the credit of the excellent support from MPA. The first batch of 7 MSc (Maritime Studies) students graduated this year.

8 Besides the two BSc and MSc programmes in Maritime Studies, NTU offers two more engineering programmes related to the maritime industry. They are the BEng programme with an option in Marine and Offshore Engineering in
the School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, and the MSc programme in Offshore Engineering in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

9 Later this afternoon, MPA and NTU would sign an extension of the MOU to facilitate tripartite research collaboration among MPA, NTU and the maritime industry.

10 NTU always seeks and supports not only academic R&D but also applied R&D with industry relevance. The speakers this afternoon include a good mix of industry practitioners and academics. I am very positive that you will find the topics interesting. The networking session that follows would be a good opportunity for all of us to mingle and find out more about the maritime industry and related R&D in NTU.

11 I am sure that you will have many thought-provoking discussions and exchange of ideas in this afternoon. I wish you all a very fruitful and successful seminar. Let me end by welcoming all of you to NTU, again. Thank you.

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