

PRESS RELEASE

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ASEAN Young Leaders in Singapore for Inaugural Model ASEAN Conference

- Conference a good event to cultivate good network of fellows throughout the region to work with ASEAN, said ASEAN Secretary-General HE Mr Ong Keng Yong at opening

More than 60 student delegates from the top universities of ASEAN countries are meeting in Singapore for a landmark conference – the inaugural Model ASEAN Conference 2007, the first of its kind in ASEAN. The biennial Model ASEAN Conference 2007 is part of the new Temasek Foundation - National University of Singapore (NUS) Model ASEAN Fellowship Programme, a cross-national undergraduate leadership programme run by NUS' premier University Scholars Programme (USP).

The ongoing 10-day conference – attended by undergraduates from the ASEAN University Network selected for their exceptional leadership potential – serves as a platform for future leaders from ASEAN to engage in the affairs of the region and to form lasting personal friendships. At the end of the conference on 18 December 2007, the delegates will present three joint declarations based on Economic, Security and Socio-Cultural themes. These consensus documents and the follow-up projects will ultimately culminate in concrete and feasible recommendations to be presented to the ASEAN Secretariat by 2009.

The conference was launched by ASEAN Secretary-General, HE Mr Ong Keng Yong, on 9 December 2007.

ASEAN Needs to Go Beyond Governments to Involve the People

In his keynote speech at the opening ceremony, Mr Ong said, "The Model ASEAN Conference is a very good event, something we should be doing more of. I hope Model ASEAN 2007 will be pursued throughout the next few years to cultivate a good network of fellows throughout the region to work with ASEAN."

Characterising "leadership in ASEAN" as "leading by vision", Mr Ong said that over the last 40 years, ASEAN has operated on the principles of mutual respect, abstention from threatening others, non-intervention, decision by consensus, which have come to be known as the "ASEAN

Way". He added, "Decisions may be slow, but every member, big or small, will have their sensitivities recognised. We pull together and move forward. The ASEAN Way should not be used as an excuse for doing nothing". He also highlighted that the basic philosophy is to help one another and through the Initiative of ASEAN Integration (IAI) narrow development gap.

Temasek Foundation Supports Model ASEAN Fellowship Programme at NUS

The Programme is supported by an expendable gift of more than \$220,000 from Temasek Foundation. The funding provided by the Temasek Foundation is instrumental in bringing participants from all the ASEAN countries to the Model ASEAN conference 2007, as well as enabling them to pursue their follow-through projects in different ASEAN locations.

"Temasek Foundation is pleased to support the inaugural NUS Model ASEAN Fellowship Programme. The programme provides an exciting platform for youths from across Southeast Asia to work on ASEAN policy issues and forge friendships with each other. These young leaders will have a great opportunity for learning and building bridges, which is very much in tandem with the foundation's mandate," said Mr Benedict Cheong, Chief Executive Officer of Temasek Foundation.

The programme is named Temasek Foundation - National University of Singapore Model ASEAN Fellowship Programme in recognition of this gift.

Associate Professor Peter Pang, Director of the NUS University Scholars Programme, said the idea of the Model ASEAN conference was first mooted by a group of passionate and motivated students in the NUS University Scholars Programme "who wondered why there was a plethora of Model UN activities but no Model ASEAN".

He added: "This initiative thus represents a truly bottom-up approach for youths to engage in ASEAN and contribute actively to policy making in the regional body. As an educator, I am extremely gratified when I see that students feel that they have the space to explore their passion and that they are empowered to take initiative."

The new Fellowship Programme goes significantly beyond merely raising awareness of ASEAN among its youth. It is put together as an ambitious long-term project with the following aims:

- To bring together undergraduate students with exceptional motivation and strong leadership potential from top universities across ASEAN to discuss issues of importance to the region;
- To provide a framework to facilitate participants' sustained engagement with these issues, to carry out follow-through activities and to actively influence policy making in ASEAN;
- To establish a network of fellows, comprising past participants of USP Model ASEAN activities; it is envisaged that this network of fellows will develop into an influential group of young leaders in the region in the next 10 years.

The biennial Model ASEAN Conference organised by USP under the Fellowship Programme will result in joint declarations that will also contain a set of specific projects and follow-up actions in different ASEAN locations. The projects are expected to include field work in an ASEAN country, which may be in the form of a fact-finding or data-collection mission.

The delegates were enthusiastic about the conference and its objectives. Ms Sambo Sopheavatey, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, said, "Since the bright prospect of Cambodia's future betterment would not be enhanced by her sole doings, the cooperative and collaborative work with our ASEAN members, as well as other international organisations, is a necessity. The conference will be a valuable opportunity for us to meet, discuss and help each other with the common goal of establishing suitable measures for regional advancement."

Delegates are given a year to come up with a set of concrete and feasible recommendations, which they will present to the ASEAN Secretariat by 2009, as well as at suitable ASEAN ministerial meetings, for consideration for implementation. These recommendations should have very well-defined aims of building capabilities and improving the lives of people in ASEAN.

Apart from policy discussion and recommendation, the Fellowship Programme is also aimed at fostering personal friendships and inter-cultural understanding among fellows.

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About National University of Singapore (NUS)

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is a multi-campus university of global standing, with distinctive strengths in education and research and an entrepreneurial dimension. Its diverse and cosmopolitan community of 23,500 undergraduate and 9,000 graduate students from 88 countries contribute to a rich learning and living environment across three state-of-the-art campuses - its principal 150-hectare Kent Ridge campus, Bukit Timah campus and its Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore in Outram.

NUS offers a broad-based curriculum underscored by multi-disciplinary courses and cross-faculty enrichment. There are 14 faculties offering courses from architecture to medicine to music. A special feature of NUS education is the global dimension of its courses in partnership with some of the world's best institutions. NUS also enjoys a close teaching-research association with 14 national-level, 15 university-level and 80 faculty-based research institutes and centres. Research activities are strategic and robust, and a 'no walls' collaborative culture forms the bedrock of NUS' research-intensive vibrancy. A spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation promotes creative enterprise university-wide. This is aided by a venture support eco-system that helps students, staff and alumni nurture the development of start-ups into regional and global companies.

NUS plays an active role in international academic networks such as the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU) and Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU). It is ranked amongst the best universities in the world, and is well-regarded for disciplines such as Technology, Biomedicine and the Social Sciences.

For more information, please visit: www.nus.edu.sg

About NUS University Scholars Programme

The University Scholars Programme (USP) is an interdisciplinary academic programme for NUS undergraduates. USP admits 180 students each year, and offers the freedom to explore across disciplines, a wide range of extracurricular and overseas opportunities, and a community of exceptionally motivated and talented students. Students admitted to USP are concurrently enrolled in one of six faculties or schools – Arts and Social Sciences, Business, Computing, Design and Environment, Engineering, and Science. Numerous initiatives available to USP students include overseas academic exchanges and community outreach expeditions, entrepreneurial internships and individual research with a faculty mentor. Students are admitted to USP based on their academic potential, together with their passion, motivation, and curiosity. USP students graduate with an honours degree from their faculty or school, and a certificate that recognises them as University Scholars.

For more information about USP, please visit www.usp.nus.edu.sg, email usp@nus.edu.sg, or call 6516-4425.

About Temasek Foundation

Temasek Foundation is a non-profit philanthropic organisation anchored in Singapore that seeks to contribute to sustainable growth and a bright future of hope and opportunities for people in Asia. The foundation works with partners to support programmes that develop people through healthcare, education and research, programmes that build bridges between peoples, programmes that build institutions of excellence through good governance and ethics, and programmes that rebuild lives and livelihoods affected by natural disasters.