

**SPEECH BY DATO JUDE BENNY  
BOARD MEMBER, SINGAPORE MARITIME FOUNDATION  
AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR BACHELOR OF  
ENGINEERING (NAVAL ARCHITECTURE & MARINE  
ENGINEERING) COURSE  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW AND STRATHCLYDE  
27 AUGUST 2008, SINGAPORE**

---

Professor Andrew Hamnett, Principal and Vice Chancellor, University of Strathclyde

Prof Atilla Incecik, Head of Department, Department of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde

BG Tay Lim Heng, Chief Executive, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore,

Parents, Graduants, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon.

It is my pleasure to be here this afternoon to witness the graduation of the third batch of the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde (or UGS)'s Bachelor of Engineering Course in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate the 21 students who have successfully completed this course. Next, I extend my congratulations to the companies who have supported some of you, in terms of providing financial support to encourage you to further your education and pursue your long-term careers in the maritime industry. The skills and knowledge acquired by our graduates will be invaluable to these companies and Singapore's progress as an International Maritime Centre.

**Collaboration between Singapore and UGS**

In 2004, this course in Singapore was initiated by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore and administrated by the Singapore Maritime Foundation as a pilot project to cater to the increasing demand for graduate engineers in the field of

naval architecture and marine engineering in Singapore's rapidly growing maritime industry.

During these three years, the UGS course in Singapore has groomed a good number of marine engineers and naval architects in Singapore. The collaboration between Singapore and UGS may be a short one, but it has indeed been a beneficial learning process and a great opportunity for the diploma holders in Singapore to enhance their expertise and attain their degree qualifications with an established and prestigious educational institution like Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the University of Glasgow and Strathclyde and the participating lecturers for their able leadership and mentoring in sharing their wealth knowledge with our students.

### **Outstanding results by the Singaporean Students**

Since the introduction of this course in Singapore in 2005, the Singapore graduates have done Singapore proud and excelled with flying colours. Last year, there were 12 first-class honours and 7 upper class honours graduates from our ranks.

This year's performance has been equally satisfying. I'm pleased to announce that you have kept the Singapore tradition of producing outstanding results. Of the cohort of 21 students, 4 have obtained first class honours and 12 upper class honours degrees and 5 lower class honours degrees.

### **Debunking stereotypical view of the maritime industry**

Some people may think that the maritime industry is not attractive as compared to other sectors such as banking and finance. I've been in the maritime industry for more than 25 years and I can assure you from an insider's perspective that a career in the maritime industry is very rewarding.

For parents, please be assured that your children have made the right choice and chosen an attractive career path in good hands. Let me share with you my

personal anecdotes about the maritime industry and what keeps the maritime professionals going in this industry.

### **Rewarding careers in the maritime industry- A Sea of Opportunities**

The Singapore maritime industry is a vibrant one that excites and energizes the maritime professionals. It is a fast-paced industry where the only constant is change. This industry is ideal for those who are game for challenges.

There is a whole sea of opportunities for young graduates like yourselves. One of our veteran maritime professionals, and a good friend, Mr Ronald Pereira once said during an interview, “I’ve been in the maritime industry for over 50 years, but never once have I been out of job.” He started his career out at sea, worked as a marine engineer, marine arbitrator and till today, he is still working as a consultant in the maritime industry.

If you possess the right attitude and a strong desire to learn, you will be able to excel in the maritime industry. A strong passion drives one to excel and attain great achievements and self-fulfillment.

As compared to some other industries which may practise the hire-and-fire approach, the maritime industry is relatively more “stable” as maritime professionals are highly valued for their expertise and experience gained over the years. It allows great room for personal growth in your chosen fields of specialization, and the rewards and remunerations are great. Many maritime professionals who started their careers in the maritime industry often stay there throughout their working lives. Last year was a good year for the Singapore maritime industry. Some of the maritime players paid out bonuses as high as 4 - 7 months of monthly salaries, as recognition for their staff’s hard work.

### **Singapore, the International Maritime Centre and the booming industry**

Recently, Minister Mentor highlighted during the inaugural maritime lecture, that the maritime industry is basic to Singapore's continued growth and prosperity.

The maritime industry is booming and there is no better time to join the industry than now. The maritime industry is a vital component of the Singapore economy, contributing about seven per cent of our Gross Domestic Product and offers more than 100,000 jobs in its different sectors. The maritime industry is expected to grow between six and nine per cent over the medium term. The Singapore maritime industry has achieved many accolades over the years and has established a credible reputation as one of the leading international maritime centres of the world.

Today, Singapore is the world's busiest port in terms of shipping tonnage and container throughput, the world's top bunkering port. Many who are not in the maritime industry may not be aware, but Singapore is the No 1 rigbuilding country in the world, having a market share of over 70% of jackup rigs and semi-submersible rigs under construction, and the world leader in FPSO conversions, the sector where some of you will be working, possessing over two-thirds of the market share. As one of the world's busiest ports, Singapore has also attracted international shipping and ship management firms, container operators, offshore and marine engineering and a wide range of companies offering maritime supporting services from banking, brokerage to insurance and law.

### **Sustaining growth and attracting new talents**

To sustain growth in the maritime industry, we are constantly on the lookout for passionate people, talented professionals to enter the maritime workforce. Take for instance, this year, with the collaboration with our maritime companies, 14 new scholarships under the MaritimeONE initiative have been offered to students and undergraduates to groom them to pursue their careers in the maritime industry. We also worked with tertiary institutions and maritime partners to organise career talks, recruitment fairs to heighten awareness of the maritime industry and assist them to seek for potential employees.

## **International Exposure**

Singapore may be a small island city, but our extensive maritime networks allow our maritime professionals to not only dream big, but to have great exposure in the global maritime scene.. We need more young and driven individuals to steer our maritime industry on to the next lap of growth and to scale greater heights in the international maritime frontiers. All these cannot be achieved without a pool of talented and skilled manpower in the different sectors of the maritime industry.

## **Laying the Foundation**

On behalf of the Singapore Maritime Foundation, I would like to welcome all of you to join our maritime workforce. This course in UGS has well-equipped you with the technical knowledge and essential skills to excel further in your professional pursuits. It has laid a firm foundation from which you can build your careers to become outstanding naval architects and marine engineers.

In years to come, you would be able to help steer the Singapore maritime industry to greater heights and excel as outstanding leaders in your respective fields of specialisation.

In closing, I will like to wish all of you an exciting and successful career ahead. And I'm confident that your careers in the maritime industry will fly to great heights, in the same manner your academic results have shown.

Finally my congratulations to all the proud parents present here, on this special day for you.

Thank you.