

Speech by Mr S.S. Teo, Chairman, Singapore Maritime Foundation at SMF New Year Cocktail Reception, 8 January 2009, Thursday, 6pm, Sentosa Pavilion at the Golf Club

Mr Raymond Lim
Minister for Transport and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs

RADM (NS) Lui Tuck Yew
Senior Minister of State for Education and Information, Communications and the Arts

Mr Peter Ong
Chairman of Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore

Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening

1. A very warm welcome to the Singapore Maritime Foundation's annual New Year Cocktail Reception.

Facing the economic downturn

2. This evening, we are celebrating the New Year against the backdrop of the global economic downturn. The Singapore maritime industry has performed well in the last few years, but the recession has hampered the growth of our industry. The current economic climate is gloomy and this year will be even more challenging than last.

Strong foundation

3. The Singapore maritime industry is one of the key pillars of the Singapore economy. Over the years, Singapore has built its position as one of the leading International Maritime Centre, the home base for many local and foreign shipowners and operators that is supported by a wide range of ancillary services, outstanding ports and infrastructure, supportive and pro-business government and our skilled workforce. Times may be bad now but our foundation remained strong. The maritime community here is big and a closely-knit one. I am pleased to advise that all the graduates of Bachelor of Science in Maritime Studies from NTU who graduated in July 2008 have successfully secured jobs in the maritime sector. With co-operation and strong camaraderie of the maritime community, I believe that we will be able to tide over this difficult period.

Key Achievements of SMF in 2008

1. 2008 has been a busy year for SMF.

Raising the profile of the maritime industry

2. In March, we launched our second maritime documentary series, *Sea of Opportunities* on Channel NewsAsia. The programme gave the public a glimpse of the maritime industry and the career opportunities it offers. I would like to thank all our partners for sharing their expertise and assisting us throughout the project.

Reaching out to the schools

3. *Friendly Waves*, a maritime supplement was circulated to young students in March. SMF also worked closely with educational institutions to bring maritime companies to participate in career fairs and career talks.

International Outreach - *Posidonia*

4. In April, SMF and ASMI led the Singapore delegation to *Posidonia* in Greece, showcasing Singapore's capabilities on the international frontier.

MPA and MaritimeONE scholarship award ceremony

5. The inaugural MPA and *MaritimeONE* scholarship award ceremony was held in July. 14 *MaritimeONE* scholarships were awarded in 2008, a substantial jump from four in 2007. This would not have been possible without the commitment of our maritime partners to assist SMF to groom new maritime talents.

***MaritimeONE* - Grooming talents**

6. In November, the *MaritimeONE* initiative, a collaborative effort between SMF, ASMI, SSA and MPA, was selected as one of the 13 winning projects for the Minister's Innovation Award conferred by the Ministry of Transport. This is a great achievement and I would like to applaud MPA for their hard work as the Secretariat in the past year. This year, SMF will take over this role from MPA and will continue to keep up the momentum.

Growing the various sectors - Shipping Finance Workgroup

7. In September, SMF's Shipping Finance Workgroup held the first-ever Shipping Finance Forum which saw over 45 leading ship owners, ship financiers, shipping analysts gathering for a high-powered dialogue session on the trends of the equity

markets in Singapore. The first networking reception for *Shipowners, Shipbrokers, Ship Financiers and Maritime Insurance Professionals* was also held on the same day.

Collaboration with The Business Times

8. In October, SMF and MPA collaborated with The Business Times to dedicate two pages to the shipping sector as part its Transport Hub supplement. The first issue was launched during the Singapore Maritime Week. Through this initiative, we hope that the shipping supplement will provide more insights about our industry and raise the profile of this sector.

Sea Asia 2009 –SMF’s flagship maritime event with Seatrade

9. Come April, our biennial flagship event, *Sea Asia 2009* will return after the successful inaugural *Sea Asia 2007*. Many of our leading maritime partners in Singapore and overseas, have been working closely with SMF and Seatrade. This show is expected to fill 4500 net square metres of exhibition space with more than 350 exhibitors. To date, more than 90% of the exhibition space has already been sold and booked and we are expecting over 10,000 participants. This maritime show is important to Singapore and the Asian region, and in spite of the recession, the show must go on. It is even more important that businesses and people remain connected in the maritime community during such times and Sea Asia presents the excellent platform for this connection.

Celebrating the 5th Anniversary of SMF

10. It has been five years since the Singapore Maritime Foundation was first formed in 2004. SMF has worked alongside with MPA and many maritime partners to spearhead key projects to help grow the Singapore maritime industry. SMF will continue to strive for new ways to heighten the awareness of the maritime industry and work with partners to grow the different maritime clusters. To celebrate this anniversary, SMF has published a commemorative publication, *SMF: Steering the Maritime Industry*. There are browsing copies placed at the cocktail tables and we would mail the publication to you in the next few weeks.

11. The shipping industry has enjoyed an extended period of good years. We are in for very choppy waters ahead, but we must remain confident and optimistic. The near

future will get worse before it becomes better. It is important for us to brace ourselves with strong determination and courage to manage these drastic changes in today's global shipping industry. This is a good opportunity for us to review our companies' strategies and resource allocation. I'm confident that we would be able to tide over this economic turmoil. When the world economy recovers, shipping in Asia will play an even more important role and we would need to get ourselves ready for this greater challenge.

12. Once again, to all our maritime partners, thank your strong support all these years. I wish all of you a good year ahead.

Thank you