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**SPEECH BY MR MICHAEL CHIA  
CHAIRMAN OF MARITIMEONE AND SINGAPORE MARITIME FOUNDATION  
AT THE MARITIMEONE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS CEREMONY,  
13 AUGUST 2015, 6.35PM AT CONRAD CENTENNIAL SINGAPORE HOTEL**

Mr Lucien Wong, Chairman of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore,  
Mr Andrew Tan, Chief Executive of MPA,  
Mr Esben Poulsen, President of the Singapore Shipping Association,  
Distinguished guests,  
Award recipients and parents,  
Good evening and a very warm welcome.

**Encouraging the Scholars**

1 Today is a very special day for the 58 young scholars receiving their MaritimeONE, as well as Tripartite Maritime Scholarships<sup>1</sup>.

2 We know that in life, there are key milestones which, depending on the path we choose we start on a journey along that path. To our scholars here tonight, congratulations! Tonight is one of those key milestones that will be a defining moment in your life. By choosing a maritime scholarship, you have secured a head start in an industry that is a pillar of Singapore's economy, contributing about 7 per cent to our nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

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<sup>1</sup> The Tripartite Maritime Scholarship (TMSS) Programme is sponsored by MPA, shipping companies and unions, to groom promising students to become Ship Captains and Chief Engineers of ocean-going merchant ships and be the leaders of Singapore's maritime industry. Students taking up the Diploma in Nautical Studies, or Marine Engineering at the Singapore Maritime Academy in Singapore Polytechnic can apply for the TMSS. TMSS was recently enhanced to provide more opportunities for Singaporeans to take up seafaring careers. Under the enhanced scheme, MPA will set aside an additional S\$6 million over the next five years to award up to 20 scholarships every year, double the number awarded in previous years. Two new sponsoring companies (NYK Shipmanagement Pte Ltd and X-PRESS FEEDERS) joined under the enhanced TMSS this year, bringing the total number of companies to five. The other three companies are APL Co Pte Ltd, Pacific International Lines (Pte) Ltd and PACC Ship Managers Pte Ltd.

3 In this journey, some of you have already decided where you are headed. For example, the Tripartite Maritime Scholars are very clear to have selected a seafaring career, spending a good part of your time at sea. Whereas for the MaritimeONE Scholars, your final career choice remains open as many job options await you on graduation in our shipping, port, maritime services, and offshore engineering sectors.

4 But whichever group you belong to, I am sure that an exciting career awaits you whether you are out at sea or working in the offices or shipyards of one of our maritime companies. I am sure that it will not be a regular 9 to 5 job but one that will bring you out of your comfort zone and provide you with the necessary challenges and opportunities that will motivate you to get out of bed every morning.

5 For myself, having been in this industry for more than 39 years now, I still find each day a new and exciting one, and it is a career choice that I have never regretted. The work has been exciting and varied, as this industry, for one, is an international one and you get to work with many companies from all over the world, serving an international clientele as well as competing on an international front. As part of Maritime Singapore, you will belong to an ecosystem which is well knitted and where the maritime community is like a family. You will find that there will be enough guidance and support from your seniors, to provide you the assistance and support to build a successful career in this industry that you have chosen.

#### **MaritimeONE Scholars: Alissa and Angelia Ong (sisters)**

6 As you pursue your maritime studies in the next few years, we hope that you could also share what you've learnt with those around you. In fact, this is exactly what happened for two of our scholarship recipients this year— Alissa Ong and Angelia Ong, who happen to be sisters.

7 Alissa decided to sign up for the Bachelor of Science in Maritime Studies after hearing her older sister, Angelia, share about her studies and internship experiences at MPA and a ship management company, as part of her Diploma in Maritime Business course.

8 Tonight, Alissa will receive the PSA – MaritimeONE Scholarship for her studies at NTU, while Angelia will pursue a degree in Maritime Business and Maritime as part of her MaritimeONE

Scholarship for overseas studies that is jointly supported by Singapore Polytechnic's Singapore Maritime Academy and Plymouth University.

### **Singapore Maritime Ambassador Programme (SG-MAP)**

9 The two sisters have embarked on very different paths to join the maritime industry, and I think their story also demonstrates the power of word-of-mouth which is something we hope to tap on under the new Singapore Maritime Ambassador Programme, or SG-MAP. This Programme was officially launched last week by Mrs Josephine Teo, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Transport.

10 Under SG-MAP, maritime students, executives and industry veterans would be identified and invited to become ambassadors of the maritime industry. They will engage different audience groups since they could relate better with the people they speak to, drawing on their own backgrounds and career experiences. About 30 ambassadors have been identified so far and we are looking to appoint more in the months to come.

### **Giving Parents' Confidence in the Maritime Industry**

11 While tonight is special for the scholarship recipients, it is also a proud moment for their parents.

12 To the parents, I would like to thank you for supporting your child's decision to join an industry that has sustained itself over the years despite the many economic cycles that the world has gone through. The maritime industry has been described as a "basic industry" by our founding forefather, the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew during the inaugural Singapore Maritime Lecture in 2007. I think this description cannot be more correct as shipping moves 90 per cent of world trade and it can be considered the backbone of the world economy. Meaning to say that the maritime industry is here to stay.

13 Singapore is home to more than 5,000 maritime companies employing over 170,000 people. In a recent survey<sup>2</sup> that benchmarked 15 cities around the world, Singapore retained its spot as

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<sup>2</sup> Singapore retained top spot as the most important maritime capital in a recent report released by Norwegian consulting firm, Menon. Singapore emerged first among 15 cities that were benchmarked in five categories: shipping centres, finance & law, technology, ports & logistics, and attractiveness & competitiveness. The report, released in

the most important maritime capital. In fact, the number of international shipping groups in Singapore has grown from just 23 in 2000, to 130 today. These shipping groups are also supported by a wide suite of maritime service providers, in areas such as ship broking, finance, insurance and legal services. We are the world's largest transshipment hub and our shipyards have developed and attained their position as a world leading ship repair and ship conversion centre as well as number one rigbuilder in the world – a most enviable position.

14 These achievements have been built over several decades and parallel Singapore's development in nationbuilding. The Government is committed to continue putting in the resources to help Maritime Singapore stay ahead of the curve. The recent commissioning of Phase 3 and Phase 4 of the Pasir Panjang Terminals by our Prime Minister in June and the ongoing construction of the Tuas mega-port are just examples of multi-billion investments to further develop our maritime infrastructure. Apart from expanding capacity, the Tuas mega-port will also adopt a high degree of automation, intelligent systems, smart sensors, and data analytics to enhance our efficiency and productivity.

15 Against this backdrop, you can see that there will be continual demand for maritime professionals, and our scholars can look forward to many exciting and diverse career opportunities.

### **Thanking the Sponsors**

16 This year, we are presenting 38 MaritimeONE Scholarships worth about S\$1.2 million – the highest total value in awards since the MaritimeONE Scholarship Programme was started in 2007. For the Tripartite Maritime Scholarships, the 20 awards this year under the enhanced scheme is also double the number awarded in previous years. It is also heartening to note that for both scholarship programmes, we have a number of new sponsors<sup>3</sup> coming on board this year. This shows that the maritime industry recognises the importance of investing in the future, and values the contributions of these young talents to bring Maritime Singapore to the next level.

17 To our scholarship sponsors, I want to thank you for your partnership in grooming the next generation of maritime manpower. It is because of industry support like yours that we are able to

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June 2015, consisted of responses from 196 maritime professionals from 33 countries. The inaugural Menon report three years ago also ranked Singapore in first place.

<sup>3</sup> The three new sponsors under MaritimeONE Scholarships this year are Flagship Ventures, Transport Capital and Sailors' Society. Two new sponsoring companies (NYK Shipmanagement Ltd and X-Press Feeders Ltd) joined under the enhanced TMSS this year.

award a total of **more than \$2.6 million worth of scholarships** tonight. I hope that the scholars would do you proud as they pursue their studies and career in the maritime industry.

## **Conclusion**

18 In closing, I would like to congratulate our scholars once again and I hope that when you look back on tonight years from now, you will recognise that it was a turning point in your life. Meantime, I hope that you enjoy your maritime journey, and that you will find it an enriching and rewarding one.

19 Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for your presence here this evening to celebrate with our scholars.

20 Thank you.