

**SPEECH BY MR ANDREAS SOHMEN-PAO, CHAIRMAN, SINGAPORE
MARITIME FOUNDATION AT THE SEA ASIA 2019 LAUNCH RECEPTION,
HELD AT MARINA BAY SANDS, LEVEL 3, HIBISCUS JUNIOR BALLROOM
ON TUESDAY, 24 APRIL 2018, 12.35PM**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

We're here to launch SeaAsia 2019, the biennial conference and exhibition which takes place as part of Maritime Week every two years. SeaAsia has grown to become one of the most important maritime gatherings globally.

There are a lot of maritime gatherings around the world, and some of you may wonder what makes SeaAsia different. The more cynical amongst you may even wonder why we need all these conferences and exhibitions at all.

Let me provide an answer. We face an unusual number of challenges today, and not just the traditional kind like oversupply of ships. We have to figure out how to save the environment by removing polluting particles from the air and moving towards carbon-free fuels – fuels which may not even exist yet. We have to work out how to contend with an increasingly charged geopolitical landscape, particularly on trade. We have to find a way to deal with new opportunities and threats unleashed by technology in the shipping supply chain.

Getting a lot of people together at an event like SeaAsia allows us to make progress on these issues, and to keep a finger on the pulse. You can see companies exhibiting their latest equipment, you can hear from leading executives on what is coming over the horizon, and you can be better prepared for the time to come.

What makes SeaAsia different from all the other gatherings? Well for a start, it is being held in one of the most complete maritime clusters in the world, here in Singapore. We are fortunate here to have pretty much all segments of the maritime industry represented by multiple companies. We have a close partnership between the public and private sectors working together to build success. And Maritime Singapore has a forward-looking strategy that embraces new technological and socio-economic developments.

This means that there is a greater chance of finding fertile ground for your ideas. If you want partners to develop a business idea, you will find shipping companies, banks, lawyers, insurance, classification, equipment makers and yards all here. If you want to embark on the digitalisation of your business, you will find strong technology competence and funding here. And if you want a business environment that will support your ideas and provide a smooth regulatory path for developing your company, you will find that here too.

In a broader regional context, SeaAsia provides a voice for Asian shipping in the world, and it's important that we use this platform to build ideas and share our concerns. With the growth of Asian economies and trade, this event allows us to come together with peers in the region and from around the world.

The Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF) is pleased to be working with our partner Seatrade UBM to present SeaAsia 2019. I wish you all an eventful week, and thank you for your support at our show next year.