

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Nus Law Faculty Initiates Collaboration With Key Asia-Pacific Law Faculties To Launch The Asian Law Institute (ASLI)**

The Faculty of Law at National University of Singapore is collaborating with leading law faculties from the Asia-Pacific region to launch the Asian Law Institute (ASLI) in Singapore. The NUS law school initiated this collaboration in light of the evolution of legal practice from one that is principally domestic to one that is more globally-oriented. At the same time, with the increase in cross-border transactions and international investment, a greater understanding of different legal traditions and cultures is necessary as lawyers will have an important facilitative role to play.

Said Associate Professor Tan Cheng Han, Dean of the NUS Faculty of Law: "Law schools around the world face two major challenges. The first is that with increased globalization, law schools can no longer afford to take a narrow jurisdictional approach to research and teaching. Secondly, increasing demands are being placed on law schools as a result of rapid changes taking place around the world, without a consequent increase in the resources available to such law schools. The establishment of ASLI represents a bold vision by its founder members to meet these twin challenges. ASLI draws together some of the leading law schools in Asia so as to facilitate research and teaching that transcend single jurisdictions. ASLI will also provide a framework within which there can be some pooling of resources to the mutual benefit of all the law schools involved."

The Working Group on the Legal Services Sector of the Economic Review Committee had also recommended the setting up of an Institute of Asian Legal Studies in Singapore and increasing legal research in Asian law and other comparative legal systems. The establishment of ASLI goes a long way towards achieving this recommendation.

Representatives from the following law schools have agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Friday, 21 March 2003, at City Hall Chambers:

- Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University;
- East China University of Politics and Law;
- Faculty of Law, University of Indonesia;
- Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws, International Islamic University of Malaysia;
- Faculty of Law, Kyushu University;
- Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore;
- College of Law, National Taiwan University;

- Faculty of Law, Peking University; and
- College of Law, University of the Philippines

The goal of ASLI is to facilitate collaboration in teaching and research among the law professors of these universities. It is envisaged that each year, law professors from the ASLI member universities will spend up to 3 months at NUS where they will meet other ASLI colleagues from the region (and from NUS). These professors will spend their time in NUS engaged in collaborative research as well as conduct joint teaching. It is also envisaged that the collaboration will lead to an annual academic conference. The first conference is expected in 2004 in Singapore and subsequent conferences may be hosted by other ASLI members. ASLI also hopes to facilitate exchanges of law student among the different universities.

To launch ASLI, delegates from the partner universities will attend meetings all day at the NUS on Friday, 21 March 2003. On the same day in the evening, there will be an official launch at the City Hall Chamber. The programme for the evening is attached. Guests include:

- Singapore's Chief Justice Mr Yong Pung How and members of the Judiciary High Commissioners and Ambassadors;
- Singapore's Attorney-General Mr Chan Sek Keong, who is also a member of the NUS Law Faculty's Steering Committee;
- NUS President Professor Shih Choon Fong and NUS Provost Professor Chong Chi Tat;
- Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large Professor Tommy Koh, who is Chairman of the NUS Law Faculty's Steering Committee;
- 1<sup>st</sup> Solicitor-General Mr Chan Seng Onn; and
- the Vice President of the Singapore Law Society and other academic staff of the National University of Singapore.

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