

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Experts From Around The Globe To Meet With Asian Government Officials On Taxation Of Tobacco, Alcohol And Petroleum Products**

The National University of Singapore's Centre for Commercial Law Studies (CCLS) will be jointly organising the Asia Excise Taxation Conference with the Washington DC and London offices of the International Tax and Investment Center (ITIC) and the Maastricht University of The Netherlands.

Held for the very first time in Singapore, this international conference will be from 2 to 4 March 2005 at the Grand Plaza Parkroyal Hotel. During the conference, international experts will meet with officials from twelve Asian governments to discuss issues relating to the taxation of tobacco, alcohol and petroleum products.

The conference's co-Chairman, Associate Professor Stephen Phua, Director of CCLS, Faculty of Law said, "Focusing on excise tax policy and administration, this conference will address key revenue, tax and customs enforcement issues facing governments throughout Asia. Some of the world's leading public finance scholars will gather in Singapore with key officials from the Ministry of Finance, taxation and customs officials from the Asian region, along with highly respected regional economists, representatives from the IMF, health and environmental experts, and industry representatives to have one of the most comprehensive, balanced and open debates on excise taxation and related health and environmental issues associated with these products."

Mr. Daniel Witt, President of the ITIC added, "As with prior, similar conferences, the Singapore conference is intended to foster a public debate on excise tax structure and levels to balance social concerns with each Government's revenue needs, while also recognizing the importance of tax and customs enforcement. A tax policy is only as good as its administrative capacity to collect it. This conference is intended to bridge tax policy theories with the realities of tax administration."

The highlights of the conference include the following:

- Opening Address by Mr. Teo Eng Cheong, Director-General, Singapore Customs, Ministry of Finance;
- Welcome address by internationally recognised public finance scholar Prof. Sijbren Cossen;
- Presentation of Special Conference Paper titled Earmarked Taxation: Tax-Expenditure Linkages in Asia and International Experiences, presented by Professor Joosung Jun, Department of Economics, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, South Korea;
- Presentation of Paper titled Alcohol Products Taxation: International Experiences and Selected Practices in Asia, by Professor Somchai Richupan, President, Siam Development Institute and former Director General, Excise Department, Ministry of Finance of Thailand;
- Presentation of Paper titled The Affordability of Cigarettes in ASEAN Countries: Implications for Tax Policy, by Dr. Adrian Cooper, Managing Director of Oxford Economic Forecasting; and

- Presentation of Paper titled Energy Products Taxation, by Dr. Milwida Guevara, CEO of Synergie Foundation and Fellow of the Public Finance Institute of the Philippines, former Undersecretary of Finance, the Philippines

During the conference, ITIC will also launch its excise taxation book titled Theory and Practice of Excise Taxation: Smoking, Drinking, Gambling, Polluting, and Driving, recently published by Oxford University Press. The book's editor, Maastricht University Professor of Economics Sijbren Cnossen, is also the Conference's co-Chairman.

We have also specially arranged for the following speakers to be available for interviews during the tea break at 10.45am at the Canning Room, Level 2.

- Dr Sijbren Cnossen, Professor of Economics at Maastricht University;
- Mr. Dan Witt, President of International Tax and Investment Center;
- Assoc Prof Stephen Phua, Director, Centre for Commercial Law Studies, National University of Singapore
- Dr. Emil Sunley, Assistant Director, Fiscal Affairs Department, International Monetary Fund;
- Mr. Adrian Cooper, Managing Director of Oxford Economic Forecasting; and
- Dr. Milwida Guevara, CEO of Synergieia Foundation and Fellow of the Public Finance Institute of the Philippines, former Undersecretary of Finance, the Philippines

Information on the conference papers, authors' curriculum vitae, and information on the organisers can be found in the events section of ITIC website (<http://www.iticnet.org>) and on the NUS website (<http://law.nus.edu.sg/ccls/conference/aetc>).