

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **NUS Hosts Second Year of Prestigious Regional Trade Policy Course**

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is pleased to announce the official opening of Singapore's Second Regional Trade Policy Course (RTPC), jointly hosted by the University's Faculty of Law and the World Trade Organization (WTO). **This important partnership between the WTO and the University's Faculty of Law was commemorated with an official Opening Ceremony and Dinner at NUS' Bukit Timah Campus on the evening of Monday, 3 March 2008.**

Gracing this event as Guest-of-Honour was Mr. Koh Tin Fook, Director of Technical Cooperation Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other distinguished guests present during the evening's ceremony included senior government officials from Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Trade & Industry, and representing WTO at the event was Ms Dolores Halloran, Fellowship Officer of the WTO's Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation.

NUS had beaten stiff competition from other universities from Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan to win the bid to host the first highly prestigious RTPC in 2007. The Singapore version of the course is largely modeled after the Trade Policy Course, which is held annually in Geneva at the WTO. It will however provide a greater emphasis on regional trade issues. NUS is expected to host this 12-week intensive course in Singapore for the next 2 years. This year's course will run from 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008 to 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008.

Twenty-five government officials from 24 countries in the Asia-Pacific region have enrolled in this year's RTPC. Classes for the participants would be at the Bukit Timah premises of the NUS Law Faculty's Bukit Timah premises, with participants getting the opportunity to utilise state-of-the-art teaching tools and facilities.

To augment their classroom experience, the programme will also include study visits to institutions that demonstrate Singapore's trade and economic policies in

practice. These include visits to organisations which include CrimsonLogic to learn how trade tools such as TradeNet help to facilitate trade in Singapore, as well as visits to private-sector companies to see how the Singapore logistics sector benefit from such facilitation. There will also be visits to PSA Singapore Terminals and ICA Ports Command to see how these have contributed to Singapore's economic development.

The course content would be covering virtually every aspect of WTO's agreements and negotiations, and will be taught by WTO, NUS and regional experts. Participants, who are mainly trade policy officials in their home countries, would then return to their countries with a comprehensive understanding of WTO's laws and policies, which would enable them to contribute positively to their own government's trade policy-related decision-making processes.

Leading the team that was set up to manage the RTPC in Singapore is Academic Coordinator, Adjunct Professor Margaret Liang. Professor Liang specialises in WTO Trade Law and was Singapore's negotiator during the Uruguay Round negotiations.

In preparation for the course, Professor Liang and her colleagues had attended a special workshop held in January this year at the WTO in Geneva. During the workshop, the NUS team had held discussions with WTO and regional experts on the state-of-play of the current Doha Round of trade negotiations.

During the official opening ceremony of the Regional Trade Policy Course, invited guests and course participants had the opportunity to experience Singapore's multicultural society, represented through cultural dance performances by student groups from the NUS Centre for the Arts.

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