



PRESS RELEASE

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ASIAN LAW DEANS MEET FOR INAUGURAL FORUM

Temasek Foundation Gift makes possible first ever Asian Law Deans' Forum on Legal Education to be jointly hosted with NUS Law School

Temasek Foundation, Singapore and the National University of Singapore (NUS) are pleased to announce the inaugural Asian Law Deans' Forum on Legal Education to be held in Singapore at the NUS Faculty of Law from 6 to 8 July 2009. Initiated by NUS Law School, with funding from Temasek Foundation as well as support from the Asian Law Institute ("ASLI"), the Forum brings together over 45 deans and leaders of law schools in the region for an intensive high-level meeting to discuss common issues regarding legal education. The participants were sought on a by-invitation-only basis and will represent over 30 institutions from Asian non-OECD countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The initiative is consistent with Temasek Foundation's commitment to capacity-building in Asia through education. Temasek Foundation has committed up to \$500,000 to NUS Law School for this programme. In addition to funding the Asian Law Deans' Forum, Temasek Foundation's grant will be made available to NUS Faculty of Law for further collaboration with regional law schools that are committed to upgrading their institutional capacity in teaching policy and pedagogy over the next 2 years. One of the objectives of the forum is to identify such possible opportunities for collaboration to enhance educational leadership in law education in the region.

The forum also follows naturally from NUS Faculty of Law's leadership in matters of legal education. In 2004, the Law School organised a symposium on the theme "Reflections on Legal Education" under the auspices of ASLI, which brought together over 40 scholars from 18 institutions. In recent years, faculty members have been active as consultants on topics relating to law curriculum design and review and law education pedagogy. The Asian Law Deans' Forum will take this to a new level by gathering the leaders of institutions together with a view to facilitating opportunities for cross-institution collaboration and co-operation.

Professor Tan Cheng Han, Dean of NUS Faculty of Law and Senior Counsel, said, "This is an important development in Asian legal education as it marks the first time that Deans from leading Asian law schools are gathering to discuss issues of importance

relating to legal education, particularly at a time when many schools are fundamentally re-examining their existing models. This forum would not have been possible without Temasek Foundation's generous funding and, perhaps more importantly, Temasek Foundation's vision in seeking out opportunities for contributing to regional capacity-building."

"Beyond the forum, this programme will hopefully create an Asian network of leaders and institutions in legal education, where knowledge in educational leadership, curriculum development and best practices in the teaching of law can be shared for long-term institutional development," said Mr Benedict Cheong, Chief Executive Officer of Temasek Foundation.

About the Forum

Today's law schools must prepare their students to face an increasingly globalised market for legal services. Many must also compete internationally for students. What special challenges do Asian law schools face in this regard? What changes, if any, are required to law school curricula, culture and teaching methods? How can Asian law schools proactively cooperate and collaborate in these matters? While these questions have previously been discussed in various fora, this will be first time that a gathering of this level has been attempted. Comprising the leaders of their respective institutions, the participants are in a unique position to effect change within their institutions and also to participate in inter-institution projects arising from the Forum.

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About National University of Singapore

A leading global university centered in Asia, the National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university which offers a global approach to education and research, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise. NUS has 14 faculties and schools across three campus locations in Singapore – Kent Ridge, Bukit Timah and Outram. Its transformative education includes a broad-based curriculum underscored by multi-disciplinary courses and cross-faculty enrichment, as well as special programs, which allow students to realize their potential. The learning experience is complemented

by a vibrant residential life with avenues for artistic, cultural and sporting pursuits. Over 30,000 students from 100 countries further enrich the community with their diverse social and cultural perspectives. NUS shares a close affiliation with 23 university-level, 16 national-level and more than 80 faculty-based research institutes and centers. Research activities are strategic and robust, and NUS is well-known for its research strengths in engineering, life sciences and biomedicine, social sciences and natural sciences. It also strives to create a supportive and innovative environment to promote creative enterprise within its community. Visit www.nus.edu.sg.

About NUS Faculty of Law

The NUS Faculty of Law is one of the finest law schools in the world, and is widely regarded as Asia's leading law school. Staffed by an outstanding permanent faculty with law degrees from more than a dozen jurisdictions, the law school is an institution dedicated to building a community and an environment in which faculty and students can discuss and reflect on the fundamental legal issues that affect societies in today's globalised world.

The strength of the NUS law school is seen in the broad and diverse range of subjects that it offers. Students at the law school can choose subjects from many clusters including Asian legal studies, banking and finance, biomedical law, commercial law, comparative law, corporate law, criminal law, intellectual property, international law, law and social justice, legal jurisprudence, legal process and skills, public law, and transportation law, just to name a few. While the subjects range from the theoretical to the practical, the overriding objective is to provide students with a liberal education through the medium of law that will allow them to maximise their potential to the fullest degree.

About Temasek Foundation

Temasek Foundation is a non-profit philanthropic organisation anchored in Singapore that seeks to contribute to sustainable growth and a bright future of hope and opportunities for people in Asia. The foundation works with partners to support programmes that develop people through health care, education and research, programmes that build bridges between peoples, programmes that build institutions of excellence through good governance and ethics, and programmes that rebuild lives and livelihoods affected by natural disasters.

About ASLI

The Asian Law Institute (ASLI) was established in 2003 through the united effort of several leading law schools in Asia. It has long been recognized that such an institute could have a significant role in fostering Asian legal scholarship and facilitating greater interaction amongst legal scholars in Asia and those working on Asian law-related issues.

Asia is an amorphous geographical entity within which all modern and ancient legal systems have and continue to operate, often in complex coexistence and sometimes in open conflict. There is a richness of material that is unique and ASLI aims to provide a focal point for scholars to work together, learn from each other and collaborate on research and teaching.

The acronym "ASLI", which means "indigenous" or "original" in several Asian languages, reflects the essence of the institution which aims to be a truly home-grown Asian law institute in Asia. ASLI has thirteen founding members, whose representatives sit on the Board of Governors which meets annually. The National University of Singapore (NUS), which led the initiative, continues to provide administrative and financial support for ASLI, including hosting its Secretariat at the NUS Law School.

As part of its aim to reach out, ASLI has admitted, and continues to welcome, new members which are law schools either located in Asia or which have a demonstrable interest in researching or teaching Asian law.