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Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) Celebrates 90th Anniversary; Heralds new era of manufacturing with new logo, new focus and aspirations

Renewing itself at 90, the SMF celebrates its 90th Anniversary with the launch of its new logo, signifying a paradigm shift to focus on new areas of a circular economy, sustainability and Artificial Intelligence, while building on its fundamental tenet of collaboration, both locally and internationally.

25 March 2023 - The Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) will present its renewed focus and energy going forward during its 90th Anniversary Gala Dinner happening tonight, which will be graced by Dr Tan See Leng, Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Trade and Industry, as the Guest-of-Honour. The dinner will see about 1000 local and overseas distinguished guests in attendance, made up of representatives from government agencies, trade associations and chambers (TACs), ambassadors and high commissioners, as well as, leaders in the manufacturing and business community – a testament to the SMF’s role as a partner in nation building.

The Federation, which started with just 17 members in 1932, has traversed the decades overcoming many different challenges such as a World War, Singapore’s pre and post-independence struggles, global and regional financial crises, and more recently, the Covid-19 pandemic. Today, the SMF has a 5000-strong membership base, comprising SMEs, MNCs and Affiliate members.

As the SMF steps into a new era of manufacturing, the SMF looks to renew itself on its 90th birthday. Aligned with the aim of achieving the Singapore Manufacturing 2030 vision set by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the SMF has identified four areas of focus, bearing the acronym **SHIP**:

- **Sustainability** - to bring environmental, social, and corporate governance matters from theory into practice, turning discussions into reality and helping our members accelerate their green plans.
- **Human Capital** - address the need for re-training, upskilling, and job re-design to alleviate the labour concerns faced by our manufacturing community.
- **Internationalisation** - assist local manufacturing firms in venturing overseas, finding partners, and exploring growth avenues in new markets.
- **Productivity** - collaborate with leading organisations to address our members' needs in innovation, as well as the protection and management of intellectual property assets.

The SMF aims to navigate the manufacturing community into this new era of sustainable manufacturing, beginning the voyage with the rebranding of the Federation. To be launched at the gala dinner tonight, a new logo for the Federation will signify a continued focus on collaboration, circularity and the potential for advanced manufacturing technology, like AI, to facilitate circular manufacturing practices.

Putting words into action, the SMF, through the SMF Centre for Corporate Learning and its industry partner, planned a training workshop within three weeks on the use case of ChatGPT for Business, making the SMF one of the first TACs to hold a workshop on ChatGPT. The workshop held on 23 March 2023 was over-subscribed and plans to hold runs of the same edition are already underway.

Additionally, as first steps of the SMF's renewal, the gala dinner tonight will also commemorate the signing of three separate Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between the SMF and three Institutes of Higher Learning ("IHLs") - the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) and Temasek Polytechnic (TP). Recognising the perennial challenge of the manufacturing sector in competing with other industries for talent, the MOUs signify a commitment to support Industry 4.0 transformation among SMF members and develop human capital in the IHLs for the manufacturing sector. **(Please refer to the Annex for more details on each MOU)**. At the same time, these will create opportunities for students to learn beyond the classroom through internships, adding practicality to their curriculum and preparing them for the evolving manufacturing landscape.

Going forward, the SMF will continue to work closely with agency partners, fellow TACs and overseas counterparts to encourage more members to embark on a voyage in line with the **SHIP** areas of focus. Through this renewal. The SMF looks forward to forming a stronger net of partners, connecting with one another to navigate the ever-challenging and evolving “waters” of the ever-evolving global marketplace.

Mr Lennon Tan, SMF President, said, "Renewal is not always easy as it involves stepping out of one's comfort zone to move towards a future that is undefined. Our new logo, signifying renewal at 90 years old, shows the manufacturing community's dedication to be resilient and adaptive for a sustainable future. For over 90 years, SMF members and the different SMF Councils have worked together to build upon the Federation's fundamental tenet of collaboration. In testament to the SMF's emphasis on building mutually beneficial partnerships, I am also very heartened that the MOUs with SUSS, NP and TP will benefit both the manufacturing community and our next generation. These MOUs are the first initiative the SMF embarks on with our new logo, and it will serve as the symbol of the renewal of the SMF, to lead our members for the next 90 years and beyond. The SMF hopes that members will set sail together with the SMF and overcome the strong waves and stormy seas in the market. We look forward to a new SMF that brings our members into a new horizon. The future may be dynamic, but together, we stand ready."

Mr Poh Choon Ann, SMF Vice President and 90th Anniversary Organising Committee Chairman, said, "I am honoured to lead the celebrations for this momentous milestone of the SMF. As we commemorate the SMF's 90-year journey, we are grateful for the unwavering support from our members, partners, and the government. Today is not just about a celebration of the SMF's past achievements but is also a new starting line to aim towards greater achievement as we continue to foster even more partnerships and nurture the next generation of industry professionals."

Professor Tan Tai Yong, SUSS President, said, "This partnership between SMF and IHLs is a fine example of the strategic importance of the industry and academic realms coming together to create new opportunities and progress through continuous investment into our human capital. As a university recognised for strong industry engagement and continuous education, SUSS is proud and delighted to lend our deep expertise in industry capacity building and research in workplace learning and transformation to develop the manufacturing talent, catalyse industry-academia collaborations and champion social good in Singapore."

Mr Mah Wee Beng, Deputy Principal of Ngee Ann Polytechnic, said, “NP is committed to nurturing talents to support our local businesses in the manufacturing sector as they leverage Industry 4.0 technologies for growth. As such, we are delighted to partner with SMF to curate meaningful learning experiences for our students and staff that will enhance skills and inspire innovation. We also look forward to helping SMF members unlock new growth opportunities through our suite of professional development programmes. We congratulate SMF on their 90th anniversary and look forward to a successful collaboration.”

Mr Peter Lam, Principal and CEO of Temasek Polytechnic, said, “TP offers our heartiest congratulations to SMF as it celebrates 90 years of supporting the manufacturing sector’s growth in Singapore, and we are excited to sign the MOU with SMF on this momentous occasion. The MOU between TP and SMF demonstrates our collective commitment to support the manufacturing sector in its Industry 4.0 transformation journey so that the sector can continue to be a key engine of growth for Singapore and a creator of exciting jobs for Singaporeans. We look forward to working closely with SMF to nurture the next generation of industry professionals and build a resilient and adaptive manufacturing sector for a sustainable future.”

About the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF)

Established since 1932, the SMF represents the interest of the manufacturing community in Singapore, driving its competitiveness and sustainable growth through serving industry-specific needs. Supported by 10 industry groups and its Associated Services, the SMF enhances the competitiveness of the industry by encouraging capacity development and capability building, innovation and productivity. The SMF provides opportunities for companies to collaborate, network, and to grow and expand both locally and internationally. Current membership stands at about 5,000 members comprising SMEs, MNCs and Affiliate members. For more information, please visit www.smfederation.org.sg.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Jane Lee (Ms) Assistant Manager, Corporate and Council Affairs, SMF Tel : 6826 3014 HP : 9623 4035 E-mail : jane.lee@smfederation.org.sg	Nicholas Ngoh (Mr) Director, Corporate and Council Affairs, SMF Tel : 6826 3013 HP : 8700 1188 E-mail : Nicholas.ngoh@smfederation.org.sg
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Annex

Details on the MOUs to be signed with IHLs

Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS)

The SMF and SUSS agreed to collaborate on the following:

(a) Industry Partnerships and Programmes in and outside of Singapore for Staff

Details relating to such partnerships and programmes, including but without limitation, duration, number of qualifying staff, reciprocity, responsibility for costs and expenses (including insurance) shall be discussed and agreed at the working level.

Examples of such local and overseas programmes are faculty and staff exchanges, business consulting arrangements, academia-industry cross-trainings, guest lecture series and any other programmes for social good and industry engagement.

(b) Capacity-building Programmes in an outside of Singapore for Students

Details relating to such programmes, including but without limitation, duration, number of qualifying students, reciprocity, responsibility for costs and expenses (including insurance) shall be discussed and agreed at the working level.

Examples of such local and overseas programmes are internships, seminar exchange, case competitions, company visits, and any other programmes for social good and student career competitiveness.

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP)

The SMF and NP agree to collaborate in:

- (a) promoting interaction between SMF and NP in mutually beneficial areas;
- (b) enhancing knowledge in areas related to Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing;
- (c) outreach to prospective engineering diploma graduates to pursue careers in areas related to Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing;
- (d) upskill, reskill and train learners (including staff) in areas supporting Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing;

in accordance with the framework of this MOU.

INTENT OF MOU

The intent of this MOU is to provide the Parties with a collaborative framework to promote awareness and interest in areas related to Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing. The collaborative framework will include:

- (a) NP staff industry attachment to SMF and/or SMF member companies to provide learning opportunities for enhancement of technical knowledge expertise, and experience;
- (b) NP student internships, as well as industrial visits by NP staff and students, to SMF member companies;
- (c) Opportunities for NP and SMF to jointly offer new training programmes to support the training needs of SMF member companies in relevant growth areas.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES

NP will:

- (a) select and propose suitable NP staff for industry attachment with selected SMF and/or SMF member companies;
- (b) provide relevant manpower support and training materials for the design, development and delivery of new training programmes to support the training needs of SMF and/or SMF member companies;
- (c) identify suitable NP students through a process of joint selection by both Parties to take up internship placements with selected SMF and/or SMF member companies;

(d) invite SMF to participate in industry talks and events arranged for NP staff and students;

(e) refer eligible companies (based on funding agency, Enterprise Singapore guidelines) to SMF to facilitate their GRT (internship funding) application who are offering local and overseas (or hybrid) internships to NP students, when possible.

SMF will:

(a) propose and arrange suitable industry attachment opportunities for selected NP staff;

(b) provide suitable local and overseas (or hybrid) internship opportunities, and/or mentorship for selected NP students;

(c) provide infrastructural and in-kind support to NP staff and students selected for industry attachment and internship, respectively;

(d) propose and arrange for suitable SMF member companies to

i. participate in talks or events organized by NP;

ii. collaborate with NP on technology development projects

(e) propose collaboration opportunities for NP to offer or jointly offer (with SMF) suitable training programmes to support the training needs of SMF and/or SMF member companies.

Temasek Polytechnic (TP)

The areas the the SMF and TP agreed to collaborate on and not limited to, are as follow:

a. Work with the SMF's various industry groups to move towards Advanced Manufacturing

The SMF encourages its member companies to progress towards Industry 4.0. Both Parties will work together to assist SMF member companies in this transformation journey. In this regard, TP is able to assess technological gaps and recommend suitable solutions to be implemented to the SMF member companies. TP will also work with the SMF on education and development of skills that are needed by the manufacturing industry.

b. Collaborate and develop short working stints, job shadowing opportunities and internship programs

Both Parties will work together to increase industry exposure for TP students to experience work in SMF member companies. This includes various modes of flexible short working stints for TP students in different years of studies. The SMF will identify and propose companies who are able to provide job shadowing opportunities to students during semester breaks. Both Parties will work together on identifying students and companies for meaningful internship programmes.

c. Collaborate with the SMF - Corporate Centre for Learning (SMF-CCL) to provide cross functional skillset training to SMF member companies (MNCs and SMEs)

TP will explore collaborating with the SMF-CCL and leverage on the SMF-CCL as a partner to identify and curate appropriate and relevant skills training programmes that can meet the capability needs of SMF member companies (both MNCs and SMEs) and TP students. Both Parties, under this MOU will work towards co-developing and co-curating programmes that can help to pivot students across industries.

d. Generate awareness for the career prospects in engineering and manufacturing

The SMF will work with TP to co-organise webinars and career talks for TP students and parents to encourage TP students to work in engineering and manufacturing upon completion of their studies. The SMF will also work with TP to organise mentoring and career guidance sessions for TP's students.