



MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED TILL 2 FEB 2017, 12 NOON

Maritime Union And SkillsFuture Singapore Partner To Develop Career Pathways For Singaporeans In Maritime Industry

SMOU CONTRIBUTES S\$1.2 MILLION TO ENCOURAGE TRAINING BERTHS FOR SINGAPOREAN SEAFARING CADETS

Amidst the current difficult times faced by the maritime industry, the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) continues to be proactive. SMOU will contribute S\$1.2 million to local shipping companies to encourage them to provide training berths for Singaporean seafaring cadets in the Tripartite Nautical Training Award and Tripartite Engineering Training Award Programmes (TNTA & TETA).

The S\$1.2 million will be contributed over a period of two years to the local shipping companies which have collective agreements (CA) with SMOU and up to 240 cadets are expected to benefit from it.

For each TNTA/TETA cadet that a shipping company takes on, they can receive a S\$5,000 contribution to offset the cost of having to provide training berths to the cadet. This serves to encourage the shipping companies to give Singaporean cadets an opportunity to have the shipboard training they require in order to move on to become full-fledged officers in the future. More importantly, it supports the development of the Singaporean core in the Maritime sector so as to have a bigger pool of qualified maritime talents even in the current economic conditions.

Guest-of-Honour, Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) and Second Minister for Defence announced this at the SMOU & Wavelink Lunar New Year Luncheon and Hong Bao Presentation on 2 February at Raffles City Convention Centre to about 1,200 tripartite partners, industry guests and members. Among the guests, more than 200 senior citizens are from SMOU's adopted home, Henderson Home and various community homes such as Care Community Services Society, Hope Community Services Centre, Jamiyah Home For The Aged, Singapore Anglican Community Service Centre @ Floral Spring, Sunshine Welfare Action Mission, and Pacific Activity Centre as part of the Union's "Care and Share" efforts.



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SMOU General Secretary, Ms Mary Liew said, “Faced with the prolonged volatile economic situation, shipping companies may naturally take cost-saving measures such as cutting down on training. We are trying to reduce that as we need qualified seafarers to maintain a strong Singaporean core. This is why SMOU is constantly looking for ways to help encourage shipping companies to provide these critical training berths to our Singaporean TNTA/TETA cadets.”

The Union has been actively introducing various schemes to help shipping companies since the shipping industry started facing headwinds. For example, in November last year, the Union set aside S\$300,000 in the form of 6,000 subsidised hotel rooms for the next 2 years to lighten the shipping companies’ financial load by introducing a Seafarers’ Accommodation Scheme (SAS, 海员住宿计划). This is aimed at providing quality lodging at subsidised rates for the seafaring officers. Last February, it announced an S\$1.5 million one-off contribution to the shipping companies which have CA with SMOU so that shipboard welfare and training for the seafaring officers can continue despite the current situation.

With the latest contribution, SMOU has pledged a total of S\$3 million to help maintain shipboard welfare and training, as well as quality lodging for the seafaring officers and building the Singapore maritime core.

FUTURE FUNDING FOR TNTA & TETA TO CONTINUE UNDER SKILLSFUTURE SINGAPORE

TNTA and TETA are tripartite initiatives that started in 2010 and 2016 respectively to train Singaporeans who want to take on a career change to become Nautical Officers or Marine Engineers working on-board commercial ships.

To date, close to 300 Singaporean cadets have been trained. Both TNTA and TETA initiatives have been well-received by more than 20 shipping employers who offer training berths and employment opportunities to cadets.

The funding support for TNTA and TETA in the form of course fees and training allowances were heavily co-subsidised by then Singapore Workforce Development Agency and



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Employment and Employability Institute, whilst SMOU and the cadet co-pay part of the course fees. Moving forward, SkillsFuture Singapore, together with SMOU, will continue to support skills development and skills deepening of the Maritime workforce.

Today, Singapore is home to more than 5,000 maritime establishments employing over 170,000 people. The maritime industry contributes to 7 per cent of Singapore's GDP.

Background Information

Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU)

SMOU was established in 1951. The union has grown from a membership base of about 400 in the 1970s to more than 30,000 members. SMOU plays a pivotal role in promoting good industrial relations between seafarers (members) and their employers, the ship-owners and ship-management companies, and the government through its strong tripartite relationships with the local, regional and international maritime community. It seeks to improve the wages and working conditions of members in the maritime industry through collective agreements with shipping companies which employ them.

Since 1993, SMOU has helped distressed seafarers claim more than US\$21 million of unpaid wages. SMOU is an affiliate of NTUC, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and Nautilus Federation. Visit www.smou.org.sg for more information.

Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA) Programme

In 2010, the TNTA was a ground-breaking programme that was jointly initiated by SMOU, then Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), and NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), to train Singaporeans for the Certificate of Competency (CoC) Class 3 qualifications issued by Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), thereby allowing the trainees to pursue a nautical career at sea as nautical deck officers. This programme is supported by MPA, Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) and various shipping companies. Thus far, more than S\$28.6 million has been invested in this initiative.

The programme has close to 300 Singaporeans being awarded and involves over 20 shipping companies which offer the cadets shipboard placements, training allowances and long-term jobs.

It has seen Singaporeans from all walks of life being given a second chance to pursue a seafaring career that they would otherwise be unable to achieve since 90% of the course fees are sponsored by then WDA, e2i and SMOU. The cadets pay only 10% of the course fees. During the course of training, cadets are given a monthly allowance of up to S\$1,400 each during the 3-year training course.

The entire TNTA programme takes approximately 3 years and SMOU is proud to have 15 cadets who graduated with a CoC Class 3 as of November 2016 and more are expected to graduate. When a TNTA cadet graduates as an entry-level seafaring officer, he can earn wages from US\$2,500 and this increases progressively up to US\$7,000 monthly as a Captain. If he becomes Captain of a specialised



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ship, he can command between a US\$7,000 to US\$20,000. It is a promising career with good progressive wages.

Tripartite Engineering Training Award (TETA) Programme

TETA is an initiative launched in 2016 by SMOU, Workforce Singapore (WSG) and e2i, and is supported by MPA, SSA and shipping companies. With shipping employers facing an acute shortage of marine engineers on board their commercial fleets, this programme gives an opportunity to Singaporeans to be trained for these well-paying jobs with a rewarding career in a dynamic industry. The S\$1.2 million programme saw close to 10 cadets being awarded in the first intake which involved some 6 shipping companies. This programme allows Singaporeans from all walks of life a second chance to pursue a seafaring career that they would otherwise be unable to achieve since 90% of the course fees are sponsored.

The entire programme takes approximately 3 years or 31 months. When a TETA cadet graduates with a CoC Class 5 as an entry-level 4th Engineer, he can earn wages from US\$3,000 and increase progressively to US\$7,000 monthly as a Chief Engineer. It is a promising career with good progressive wages. TETA is currently running its second intake.