



Speech at the

**TUM Asia 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner  
at Fullerton Hotel Singapore**

13. June 2022

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President  
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The spoken word shall prevail

Good evening - Excellency Dr. Norbert Riedel, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Singapore

Distinguished guests of the statutory board of the Singapore Government, the National Research Foundation, the DAAD, university partners, industry partners, colleagues from TUM Asia and TUM Create, and friends. Warmest welcome to all of you!

I feel honored to be part of this dinner to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of TUM Asia. The last 2 years have become a time of great uncertainty and disruption in our lives – in many aspects, from work in school or office, to gathering with friends and family.

More than ever, we all appreciate coming together again, and to commemorate the many accomplishments of TUM Asia. Today, we honor the longstanding years of trustful collaboration with you all – this has been integral in shaping what TUM Asia is today.

More than 20 years back our former President Wolfgang Herrmann made the bold decision to charter TUM ASIA as the first branch of a German University abroad here in Singapore – most promising innovation hub of South-East Asia.

TUM ASIA was established in 2002 with the support of Singapore's Universities and Agencies and the German Government through the Federal Ministry of Education & Research and The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

We developed strong relationships with local institutions in Singapore, in particular with NUS and NTU – later also SIT. Together, we aimed at pioneering future workforce education an increasingly interconnected world through combining German Engineering with an Asian relevance, entrepreneurial spirit and inter-cultural mindset.

However, there was no playbook to follow, nor significant history to reference. We were faced with so many unknowns, the formative years of TUM Asia were undoubtedly challenging and unprecedented. But this pioneering time also heralded a wealth of opportunities to boost global visibility and impact of TUM through the benefits of gaining twin perspectives from the East and West. And this helped to attract high-caliber students with the ambition to drive the progress of innovation for people and society. Today, our TUM ASIA Campus is offering 5 MSc and 2 BSc programs in Singapore – since 2015 on the premises of the Singapore Institute of Technology!

Since its inception, TUM Asia has grown both in students and recognition. Lecturers and professors hail from Germany and their wealth of knowledge from various fields mixed with the competence of the colleagues from academic institutions in Singapore

provide an inspiring spectrum of expertise and unique experience for the students of TUM Asia.

In these 20 years, more than 2000 graduates from more than 35 countries came through the doors of TUM Asia to attend our undergraduate, graduate and executive education programs and to start careers in industry or research on a global level.

The success within 20 years came through a collaborative, rather than a siloed approach: We have initiated discussions, established new connections, and forged trusted collaborations with respective government bodies, universities and industry leaders.

We brought this value-add to the students: We not only provide our students the necessary technical knowledge and skill-set suited to industry needs. We also provide them a more profound sense of purpose in life and well-rounded perspectives as required for future innovation!

First, we entered in a trusted cooperation with the respective government bodies: Invited by the Global Schoolhouse Initiative of the Economic Development Board, and with support from the German Embassy Singapore, the German Chambers of Industry & Commerce, and the Federal Ministry of Education & Research, we were able to connect with like-minded innovators.

And with the scholarships supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), we have levelled the playing field and supported access to an unparalleled university education to international learners.

Second, cooperation with industry partners, many of those are with us: For instance, the collaboration with FESTO Didactic in 2016: this aimed to develop educational activities for upskilling students and employees interested in Automation Technology and Industry 4.0 in Singapore. In 2018, this led to our joint Specialist Diploma in Advanced Digital Manufacturing.

With the support of SkillsFuture Singapore, there were more opportunities for working professionals for continuous learning. Following the successful training of 60 working professionals, we deepened the cooperation with FESTO Didactic in 2019 and established The Competence Centre for Digitalisation, Technologies & Innovation.

We did that to accelerate the transfer of industry best practices to the manufacturing industry in Singapore through its continuing education, training and professional service offerings.

More than 490 professionals have benefitted so far from this dual industrial-academic learning experience in professional certificates and masterclasses.

And also the multi-dimensional collaborations with other industry partners, such as Evonik, Siemens, and TÜV SÜD, were to the benefit of our students' learning experience. Together, we enabled them to adapt to constant change and to adopt appropriate tools to successfully navigate in today's Terra Dynamica.

Third, our trustful cooperation with the university partners present here: They have been integral in establishing the various Joint Degree Programs. TUM Asia began with a joint MSc Degree in Industrial Chemistry with the National University of Singapore. And it still remains one of the highly sought-after courses among international students looking for global insights from renowned Professors of both institutions.

2005, through cooperation with Nanyang Technological University Singapore, we have launched 2 MScs in Integrated Circuit Design and Microelectronics, now known as Green Electronics, and a TUM-NTU joint PhD program in 2010.

We partnered with Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), we have launched 2 Bachelor of Engineering programs, now jointly offered by both TUM and SIT: Electronics & Data Engineering, and Chemical Engineering.

These programs are a testament to the deep collaboration between university partners and our collective commitment to providing our students with greater adaptability and industry readiness.

I would like to thank Dr. Markus Waechter, Managing Director of TUM Asia for his visionary action, inspiring passion, bridge-builder mentality, and loyalty in further growing TUM Asia's educational impact.

With the foothold of TUM ASIA, we sought for the next opportunity to contribute to Singapore's strive to become Asia's innovation ecosystem through connecting academia with industry & government and Singapore with the world.

8 Years after the foundation of TUM Asia in 2010, our teaching mission was complemented by the research institution TUM CREATE. Funded by Singapore's National Research Foundation, TUM and NTU joined forces in R&D on electromobility and autonomous public transport to medical technology and now – on advanced food science & technology:

Under the leadership of Prof. Preiser/NTU and Prof. Becker/TUM, the new CREATE-Project Proteins4Singapore, has just been granted, with Prof. Ulf Schlichtmann as its CEO.

This project combines the diverse disciplines from NTU, SIT, A\*STAR, and various industry partners to develop next-gen technologies enabling the manufacturing of nutritious food in Singapore's urban environment.

Here, I want to cordially thank the National Research Foundation for their continuing generous support and their trust in the joint innovation potential of our team of scientists!

The technologies developed are even more important in times of historic geopolitical disruption with the war between Ukraine and Russia – two of the world's top crop producers. This has plunged the global food crisis into unprecedented depths. With the launch of a new MSc in Food Safety, TUM Asia will contribute to nurture more domain experts in food safety helping to create more resilient global food supply chains.

Celebrating this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary is not only another chapter added to the story book of TUM Asia. It promises new adventures and excitement, an expanded vision, and new opportunities to grow in quality, breath and impact.

While we celebrate this milestone in our journey, our One World is still confronted with the pandemic. But the Covid-19 storm may be minor compared to what we could face in the decades to come if climate change continuous unbroken – with all its impact on biodiversity, energy/food/water supply, mobility/communication supply, human health,...and societal cohesion!

Like Covid-19, many of our challenges we are facing are challenges that transcends borders, countries, and continents, they are global challenges – just in slow-motion when compared to the virus.

And like Covid-19, addressing these challenges requires that we change behaviors. While at the same time we deploy development of new technological solutions to tackle these crises.

This may seem like a daunting task. But this year has also shown us what we can achieve, e.g. to create and deploy novel vaccines in ultra-speed in less that 12 months when we focus our attention and bundle our resources.

Finding solutions will require a „Diversity of Thought“ and the best minds from across the disciplines and cultures to work together. This is for what our 20 years of presence in Singapore and our friendship to the Singaporeans are standing for!

What people appreciate about us is that we pursue excellence but not just for the sake of excellence. We pursue excellence for a purpose: to the benefit of humanity & nature – together with like-minded innovators like our friends in Singapore.

Let's empower people, create impact and shape our future through collaborative action!

I would like to thank you all for your cooperativity, on-going support, trust, and friendship – Thank you all!