It gives me great pleasure to be here today to witness a milestone in our strong partnership with Mizuho Corporate Bank Ltd., Singapore Branch.

In July last year, NUS Business School and Mizuho Corporate Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding, paving the way for a new strategic alliance. It covers key aspects such as the setting up of bursaries, scholarships and the initiation of other collaborations.

Today we mark another significant step that will strengthen this partnership. I am encouraged that in this time of financial uncertainty, Mizuho has pledged
over three hundred thousand dollars to NUS Business School. This is a strong indication that like us, Mizuho Corporate Bank also values education and believes in contributing back to the society.

What has inspired me even more is that this belief of giving isn't just a top management directive. From the Mizuho Corporate Bank's staff giving programme, I know that the staff has given generously collectively, far superseding the goal that was set initially. To those of you who have given, thank you for making a difference in the lives of our undergraduates. I am confident that your act of kindness will inspire many more to follow suit.

Each Mizuho Bank Bursary is valued at $2,500 and will go to financially needy undergraduate students of our School. Each Mizuho Bank Scholarship is valued at $5,000 and will be awarded to academically outstanding undergraduates. Apart from these scholarships and bursaries, Mizuho will also offer internships at its Singapore Branch and Tokyo head office. Their executives and professionals will also have opportunities to enhance their learning at the many seminars and workshops with NUS Business School. Plans for joint research projects are also in the pipeline.

Let me add a personal note. Today's event brings back memories for me. I remembered being a poor student during my school days, with less than a few hundred dollars for the whole school term. When I received a much-needed
scholarship, I felt an immense relief and had the freedom to solely focus on my studies. I also remembered how grateful I was when I secured a research internship during my summer break – the timing was perfect as I was eager to look for a summer job. It gave me the opportunity to learn as well as get paid.

There will be people who will be impacted and encouraged, beyond words, by the generosity of others. I am one such example and especially in the current economic winter, more individuals will be benefit from our work.

Last but not least, let me add that no man is an island. In a global community, an organisation’s success cannot be attributed solely to its own leadership and their supporting teams. Instead, it is through close working relationships with like-minded institutions that add to the value of the company. I look forward to sharing more milestones with Mizuho Corporate Bank in 2009.

I wish you a good day ahead.