Singapore Management University or SMU and Singapore Institute of Directors or SID have signed an agreement to enhance the expertise of young directors in Singapore...

It's hoped this will further promote better corporate governance among Singapore listed firms.

This comes close on the back of the recent announcement by the Finance Ministry, to lower the age for directorships to 18 years, from 21.

The MOU allows the two organisations to, amongst other things, jointly develop executive education programmes, organise conferences and conduct business reasearch over a three year period.

A main aim is to develop executive diploma programmes to grow the level of competency of Singapore directors.

SID President, John Lim, says skills improvement may lead to better understanding of a current hot topic -- the role of a director, especially independent directors.

This issue was brought to the fore last month, when retailer Robinson & Company’s board lost three independent directors following a boardroom fall-out.

Mr Lim also thinks there should be a cap on the number of directorships an individual can hold.

"The nominations committee as well as the board of the company on which this individual sits must consider whether a director has or has not fulfilled his commitments and responsibilities. If they feel that this person has too many things on his plate and cannot fully devote the time required to discharge his responsibilities effectively, then the nominations committee and the board must then decide whether the person should continue to sit on the board."

Mr Lim added SID will soon issue a statement to provide more comprehensive guidelines on the role of independent directors.

Apart from that, they'll launch a forum to discuss the role of independent directors and it'll be chaired by Singapore's Ambassador-at-large, Professor Tommy Koh.