

MEDIA RELEASE

SNCF Chairman, Mr Kwek Kok Kwong, elected to International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) Global Board

Singapore, 17 November 2017 - Members of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), the apex organisation for more than 300 member organisations across 105 countries and representing close to one billion individuals worldwide, have today elected Mr Kwek Kok Kwong, Chairman of the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF), into the ICA Global Board.

Mr Kwek, who is also Chief Executive Officer of NTUC LearningHub Co-operative Limited, is one of 15 newly-elected members of the ICA Board this year. The Board oversees the interests of the global co-operative movement and works with international policymakers to create a more supportive political, legal and regulatory environment in which co-operatives can thrive.

Based on 2017 World Co-operative Monitor¹, an annual research report produced by ICA that collects data on co-operatives around the world, the largest 300 co-operatives have a combined turnover of USD2.16 trillion in 2015, exceeding the GDP of countries such as Canada (USD1.53 trillion) and Italy (USD1.85 trillion) and placing it among the world's top 10 economies.

This year, there are 21 candidates for the 'at large' board of directors.

Mr Kwek is the second Singaporean to be elected into the ICA Global Board after Mr Seah Kian Peng, Chief Executive Officer, NTUC FairPrice Co-operative Ltd of Singapore. Mr Seah served on the Board for three terms from 2005 to 2017.

Dr Ang Hak Seng, Executive Director of the Registry of Co-operative Societies (the Registry), and Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) said: "On behalf of MCCY and the Registry, I would like to congratulate Mr Kwek on his appointment to the ICA Global Board. This is a strong testimony to Singapore's achievement and contribution to the global co-operative sector. I believe that Mr Kwek will represent Singapore well in the global co-operative movement to meet the changing needs of people around the world. Through greater collaboration in areas like supporting the silver generation and engaging the youth, we can build a stronger co-operative movement and bond within communities."

The election took place at ICA's Global Conference and General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. From 14 to 17 November 2017, ICA members and the global co-operative community gathered to discuss the sustainability and growth of the co-operative movement.

¹ <https://monitor.coop/sites/default/files/publication-files/executive-summary-web-1013346240.pdf>

Themed “Putting People at the Centre of Development”, the conference delved into the key role of co-operatives, as a growing and sustainable form of enterprise, can play to improve equality, end poverty, care for the environment, and empower communities around the world.

“It is a great honour for me to be elected and I am grateful to ICA members, ICA-Asia Pacific Board members and SNCF for their support and nomination. Co-operatives have a unique sustainable business model that puts people at the centre of development. As a new member of the Global Board, I believe my experience in diplomacy and collaboration will help ICA to achieve its strategic objectives – to create an enabling environment for co-operatives to thrive and grow, and to advance the global co-operative movement’s economic and social impact,” said Mr Kwek, who will serve a four-year term from November 2017. He continued, “I also look forward to forging closer collaborations between local, regional and international co-operatives, supporting the needs of the world’s ageing population and growing the co-operative movement amongst the youth of today to promote the sustainability of the co-operatives. Only by working together can we be Greater Together.”

A board member of the ICA-Asia Pacific Board since November 2016, Mr Kwek has actively forged closer relations and strengthened ties between Singapore’s co-operative movement and regional and international co-operatives. Under his leadership, SNCF has hosted and organised many exchanges with co-operative leaders from countries such as Iran, South Korea, India and Malaysia.

As the CEO of NTUC LearningHub, Singapore’s largest education and training co-operative, Mr Kwek had been instrumental in supporting the nation-wide SkillsFuture campaign to re-skill and up-skill the workforce, focusing on Infocomm Technology (ICT) and digitisation to better prepare employees for a fast-changing economy. In recent years, he also led the expansion of its suite of offerings to include training in design thinking, productivity, human resource, and eldercare.

ICA is an independent, non-governmental association that unites, represents and serves co-operatives globally. Members of ICA include national level co-operative federations, individual co-operatives, organisations and government offices.

It is one of the first non-government organisations officially recognised by the United Nations. Today it holds general category consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and works with global and regional governments and organisations to create conducive legislative environment that allow co-operatives to form and grow.

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ABOUT SINGAPORE NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE FEDERATION

The Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) is the apex body of Singapore's Co-operative Movement, and secretariat of the Central Co-operative Fund (CCF). Formed in 1980 with the aim of championing Singapore's Co-operative Movement, the apex body represents 99% of co-operative members in Singapore through its 66 affiliated co-operatives. Today, the Movement boasts a base of more than 1.4 million members. SNCF aims to promote and develop co-operatives as sustainable enterprises that address social and economic needs through the co-operative principle of self and mutual help, so as to foster a more resilient society. SNCF is a member of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) and the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU).