

**05 October 2012
MEDIA RELEASE**

**Co-op Wheels Adventure 2012:
100 Singapore and Malaysia co-operatives foster trade relations in
cross-border exchange**

Singapore, 5 October 2012 – Co-operatives (co-ops) from Singapore and Malaysia will foster budding trade relationships between the two countries at the *Co-op Wheels Adventure 2012*, which flagged off this morning. The road trip aims to strengthen ties between Singapore and Malaysia co-operatives and to enable cross-border collaborations that will benefit the co-operative movement in both countries.

Mr Seah Kian Peng, Member of Parliament, flagged off the Singapore convoy this morning in his capacity as Advisor to the IYC National Committee Singapore and board member of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA).

The three-day expedition is organised by Singapore co-ops - Customs Credit Co-operative Society (S) Limited, TCC Credit Co-operative Limited, Singapore Amalgamated Services Co-operative Organisation Limited, Singapore Government Staff Credit Co-operative Society Limited and Citiport Credit Co-operative Limited.

Nurturing the co-operative movement

Co-op Wheels Adventure also promotes the sharing of best practices between Singapore and Malaysia co-operatives as they learn from one another's successes.

Supported by the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF), this initiative is organised by co-operatives, for co-operatives, and is part of the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives (UN IYC) Singapore Programme 2012.

The entourage of one bus and 14 cars, carrying more than 80 members from 12 co-ops, is personally led by SNCF's Chairman, Mr Chan Tee Seng, and Chief Executive Officer, Ms Dolly Goh. They will travel to Kuala Terengganu where they will meet and network with Malaysian co-ops and Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Berhad (ANGKASA), the national co-operative organisation of Malaysia.

Singapore co-ops participating in this road trip include the Singapore Government Staff Credit Co-operative, Premier Security Co-operative, The Singapore Teachers Co-operative, Singapore Bank Employees Co-operative, Customs Credit Co-operative, Statutory Board Employees Co-operative, AUPE General Services Co-operative, TCC Credit Co-operative, Bedok Multi-purpose Co-operative and Citiport Credit Co-operative. They will be meeting their Malaysian counterparts such as Noor Arfa Batik Terengganu, Koperasi Niaga Losong, Koperasi Homestay and more.

This initiative aims to widen the success of cross-border co-op partnerships.

"Structurally, Malaysia co-operatives movement can be segmented into the flourishing urban segment which is financially strong and the rural segment comprises of various types of agro-based and fishermen's co-operatives. Our societal needs are different so the co-op scene evolves differently, too. But we are happy that this road trip gives us a chance to refresh our understanding towards each other.

"The opportunity to meet and interact with the Singapore co-operators is valuable. We believe given the proximity between the two nations, there will be immense synergies which we can tap into as the interaction continues," said ANGKASA's President, Prof. Dato' Dr. Mohd Ali Baharum.

Strengthening co-operative functions

“Sustainability and delivering social good is at the core of every co-operative. Besides exploring productive collaborations to enhance their potential, the networking trip also provides a communicative channel to discuss the issues facing Singapore and Malaysia and how co-ops can better cater to societal needs,” said Ms Dolly Goh.

"Co-operatives are the agents of social cohesion. The formation and growth of co-operatives must cater to the changing needs of society, providing financial relief, health care, childcare, education, employment, and keeping global market forces in check. These are issues that know no borders and by learning from one another, co-operatives can improve upon their functions and capabilities to become sustainable and resilient enterprises."

This initiative aims to widen the success of cross-border co-op partnerships hot on the heels of the successful IYC Regional Conference organised by SNCF and held on 3 Oct at Suntec City. The conference saw a large number of overseas delegates in attendance, particularly from ANGKASA.

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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 70 affiliated co-operatives. Today, the Movement boasts a base of more than 1 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). It enjoys co-operative relationship with the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other international and regional bodies. For more information on SNCF and the Singapore Co-op movement, visit www.sncf.org.sg.

About the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives (IYC), highlighting the contribution of co-operative social enterprises to social-economic development, particularly their impact on poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

Under the theme, 'Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World', the IYC seeks to encourage the growth and formation of co-operatives all over the world, while inspiring individuals, communities and governments to recognize the value of co-operatives to society, and in achieving development benchmarks as those set forth in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Led by the Singapore National Co-operative Federation, the United Nations IYC Singapore Program is the most significant milestone for the local co-operative movement, as it engages Singapore in a year-long series of activities that aims to raise awareness and educate the public about the social value and impact of co-operatives. It also seeks to bring the different co-operators to come together as one.

These programs include:

Children's Storybook series (launched in 4 parts throughout 2012)

SNCF launched a Children's Storybook series to encourage character building, promote reading and instil positive values among children. Written by award winning writer Emily Lim, supported by SEED Institute, the stories are based on co-operative values of co-operation, mutual help, self-help and caring for the community. The 3rd book Under The Sea, Under the Sea is launched on the day of the Conference 3 Oct 2012 and will join the first two books A Very Big Storm & Little Otter Goes Fishing on the shelves of our public libraries and some pre-schools.

Co-op Hot Shots Photography Competition (1 March to 10 May 2012)

The photography competition provided a platform for the general public, especially photography enthusiasts to put their shooting skills to good use. Participants interpreted cooperative values and represented them through photographs. Award-winning photos are displayed

Co-opaliciouz (9 June 2012)

'Co-opaliciouz' was the largest gathering of co-operative members, staff, and families in Singapore's history. Centered on the spirit of 'Coming together as one', 'Co-opaliciouz' brought together more than 15,000 people to raise public awareness for Singapore's co-operative movement of which 1 in 3 Singapore residents are members. These first-of-its-kind events included:

- 4,000 co-operators and their families from 42 co-operative social enterprises participating in a family fun walk, and arriving in Marina Barrage as one co-operative movement to participate in the launch of Co-opaliciouz
- The launch of Singapore's first-ever legal tender co-operative stamps and First Day Covers by President Tony Tan, alongside SNCF Chairman, Chan Tee Seng. This unique set of legal tender stamps, traces milestones of the co-operative movement.
- Chorus Reading of 'A Very Big Storm', the first of four children storybooks by SNCF on co-operative values by the largest number of co-operators and families at a single event.
- The largest number of co-operators and families breaking light-sticks at a single event, before breaking out into a specially composed and choreographed dance, titled 'Come Together as One'. The mass dance with light-sticks culminated in a fireworks extravaganza, in symphony with the Co-opaliciouz music theme
- Breaking of a record for the largest number of fathers and children reading a storybook at Co-opaliciouz, in celebration of the IYC with the collaboration with the national Library Board.

IYC Regional conference (3 October 2012)

The IYC Regional conference brought close to 1,000 co-operative leaders from the region as well as representatives from global co-operatives like Rabobank and Fonterra to Singapore. Themed "How Social Capital drives Growth and Sustainability", the conference provided a platform to discuss the value and future direction of co-operatives. Author and Professor Rosabeth Kanter who wrote the acclaimed book 'SuperCorp' was the keynote speaker. The attendees included 350 leaders from the VWO and NPO sectors in Singapore. This is a true example of 'Coming Together as One' with not just local co-operatives but also those from around the region eg Malaysia and Indonesia. To mark the end of the conference, 100 co-operators from Singapore and region went on a round-trip car rally to Malaysia.



IYC Closing & Honour Awards Dinner (19 January 2013)

A closing dinner will be hosted for 500 leaders and members of Singapore co-operatives. An awards presentation will also take place to honour those who have contributed to growing the co-operative movement in Singapore.