

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Former Singapore President S R Nathan and six other esteemed figures honoured for contributions to Singapore's Co-operative Movement**

*SNCF also announces new Grant framework to support growth of co-operatives in  
Singapore*

**Singapore, 19 January 2013** – Seven esteemed figures, including former Singapore President S R Nathan and the late Singapore President CV Devan Nair (award received by his son, Janadas Devan), were honoured for their contributions to the growth of the Singapore Co-operative Movement at the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) Honour Awards 2013 that took place this evening.

The Co-operative Champion Award was specially created by SNCF to recognise respected individuals who championed the co-operative mission. The other Co-operative Champions honoured include Member of Parliament for Marine Parade GRC and NTUC FairPrice Chief Executive Officer Seah Kian Peng, immediate past Secretary-General of NTUC and current Singapore Labour Foundation Deputy Chairman Lim Boon Heng, former Minister of State for the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, who also served as Chairman of the SNCF Board of Trustees, Chairman of Central Co-operative Fund and former Chairman of NTUC FairPrice S Chandra Das; and Chairman of Seacare Co-operative Limited Leow Ching Chuan.

Said Mr Chan Tee Seng, Chairman of SNCF, "Without their support, vision and leadership through the decades, the Co-operative Movement would not have thrived and achieve a reach as wide today."

Mr Lim Swee Say, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) was the Guest of Honour. Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth & Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information Lawrence Wong presented the Co-operative Champion Awards.

The event was attended by more than 500 co-operative leaders and members.

### **Promoting the economic and welfare interests of the people**

22 co-operators and co-operative were also recognised at the SNCF Honour Awards 2013 for their significant contributions to the growth of the Singapore Co-operative Movement. Guest of Honour Mr Lim Swee Say presented the Awards.

Through their respective co-operatives, they contributed to the development of co-operative sectors in thrift and loan, early childhood education, supermarket, and social welfare, to better serve the economic and welfare interests of members and that of the larger society. Those who have also benefitted from the Singapore Co-operative Movement include the elderly, ex-offenders and those less fortunate such as low-income families and the physically disabled.

NTUC FairPrice Co-operative was given the Special Rochdale Award, a new category nominated by SNCF to recognise the work that NTUC FairPrice has consistently

accomplished in the last 15 years since it was awarded the highest honour of the Rochdale Plaque in 1998. Another new category created is the Special Commendation Medal, given to individual co-operators for their outstanding body of work and contribution towards the Singapore Co-operative Movement. The awards were presented to Mr Ranjit Singh, Internal Auditor of Singapore Prison Service Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society, Mr Chua Poon Guan, Treasurer of Singapore Teachers Co-operative Society and Mr Cheong Puk Fai John, Chairman of Methodist Co-operative Society.

By recognising outstanding co-operatives and co-operators, the SNCF Honour Awards also aims to inspire social entrepreneurs to develop innovative co-operatives through sharing the achievements of award winners.

### **SNCF Co-op Scholarship 2012**

SNCF also awarded the 2012 SNCF Co-op Scholarship to three young individuals. The three recipients are Li Mengzhu, 20, Joan Loh, 19 and Koh Wei Meng, 21. They were selected from over 150 applicants. The annual Scholarship aims to develop promising young talent who are passionate about serving society while excelling academically.

### **SNCF announces new Grant framework for co-operatives**

SNCF will be launching a new Grant framework under the Central Co-operative Fund (CCF) to address the specific needs of co-operatives and to assist them with their growth and development.

The Grant will provide budding social entrepreneurs with the necessary support to set up a new co-operative to meet unmet social needs. For existing co-operatives, they can use the Grant to improve their productivity, build capabilities, expand their services, and for staff development.

SNCF continues to invest in developing entrepreneurship and social mindedness in youths. It is working closely with secondary schools, polytechnics and universities to embed co-operative education into the curriculum through elective courses, campus talks, and competitions.

“The aim is to provide them with practical social entrepreneurial experience and provoke their sense of social mindedness. We have received very good support from the schools. We are working together with the Registry of Co-operative Societies to simplify the setup of co-operatives or form co-operative clubs in secondary schools to enable more young social entrepreneurs to use their passion and creativity to address social needs as part of character building,” said Mr Chan.

### **Rounding up a milestone year for the Singapore Co-operative Movement**

Held in conjunction with the SNCF Honour Awards was the closing ceremony of the United Nations’ International Year of Co-operatives (IYC) in 2012. The Singapore Co-operative Movement marked the year with a series of events to build solidarity among co-operatives in Singapore and the region. This included Co-opaliciouz, the largest co-operative gathering in Singapore’s co-operative history attended by over 15,000 co-operative members, staff and their family.

The local and international profile of the Singapore Co-operative Movement was also raised with the production of Singapore's first legal tender co-operative stamps and First Day Covers launched by President Tony Tan, and a children's co-operative storybook series of four books produced by SNCF that is also available in South Korea (translated to Hangul) and the United Kingdom. This year, the bilingual versions (English and Mandarin) of all four books will be set in production.

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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](http://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 instill 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 4<sup>th</sup> book, *The Really Really Hot Day*, was launched at the IYC Closing and Honour Awards Dinner on 19 Jan 2013 and will join the first three books *A Very Big Storm*, *Little Otter Goes Fishing & Under the Sea*, *Under the Sea*, 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 co-operative values and represented them through photographs. Award-winning photos were 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 e.g. 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 was hosted for more than 500 leaders and members of Singapore co-operatives. An awards presentation also took place to honour those who have contributed to growing the co-operative movement in Singapore.