



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL EMBARKS ON NEW TERM WITH GOAL TO HELP MAKE SINGAPORE A GREAT PLACE FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

The National Family Council (NFC), formed on 1 May 2006 with members from the people, private and public sectors to champion the building of resilient families, embarks on its new term with a goal to help make Singapore a great place for families and children.

2 The 18-member Council, appointed by the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, continues to be helmed by Mr Lim Soon Hock who is also Chairman of the Centre for Fathering. It started work in its new 2-year term in August 2008 with the following eight new faces, from the business, academic and social sectors:

- Mr Boon Yoon Chiang - Country Chairman, Jardine Matheson Group of Companies in Singapore, and Chairman/Managing Director of Jardine Matheson (Singapore) Ltd;
- Mr Douglas Foo - Chairman and CEO of Apex-Pal International Limited;
- Mr Leng Chin Fai - Director, Fei Yue Family Service Centre;
- Mr Mohammed Ali Mahmood - Executive Director, PPIS Jurong Family Service Centre;
- Mr Peter Tan - Principal, Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Road);
- Ms Toh Hwee Tin - Director, Family Development Unit, National Trades Union Congress;
- Ms Wong Fong Tze - Vice-President (Corporate Communications), PSA Corporation Ltd; and
- Mr Anthony Yip - Director, Far East Organisation (Retail Management).

3 The Ministry would like to express its appreciation to the following members who have stepped down after serving the Council in its past term:

- Ms Animah bte Abdul Gani – Registrar, Syariah Court;
- Mr Goh Kim Hua - Member, Youth Development Council of Singapore Soka Association;
- Mr Koh Juan Kiat - Executive Director, Singapore National Employers Federation;
- Ms Leong Ching – PhD Candidate, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy;
- Mr Lye Fei – Chief Executive Officer, Care Corner Singapore;
- Mrs Rathi Parimalan –Principal on Scholarship, Reading for Master in Public Management;
- A/P Paulin Straughan - Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, NUS; and
- Mr Tan Kian Chew – Group Chief Executive Officer, NTUC FairPrice Co-operative Ltd

4 Chairman Mr Lim Soon Hock said, “I am grateful for the invaluable contributions of all members of the Council in the first term. It has been a privilege to work with them to further the cause of the family. They have played a pivotal role in forging the identity of the Council and contributed much to the Council’s achievements in promoting the family in Singapore.”

5 Mr Lye Fei, who served in the Council’s first term, said, “The greatest joy one can experience after having a family is the gift of children and grandchildren. I am honoured to have served on the National Family Council for a term and being able to participate in the many spirited discussions with Council members in the past two years.”

6 Added Mrs Rathi Parimalan, who also served in the first term, “The inaugural term of the NFC was a most enriching and fulfilling experience for me. The synergy of the team was good, the diversity brought in different concerns and perspectives and most importantly, the passion was compelling and infectious. I have enjoyed my term tremendously and would like to take this opportunity to wish the new committee all the best for the next phase of the NFC journey.”

7 Looking forward, Chairman Mr Lim Soon Hock added “The recent announcement on Marriage and Parenthood by the Prime Minister at the National Day Rally bears testimony to the importance that the nation places on the family. As a people-sector led Council, we will continue to engage key stakeholders to tap their collective wisdom to address topical or prevailing family issues and challenges, and provide feedback to help shape and refine government’s policies, as what the Council had done for the recent enhancement to the Marriage and Parenthood Package. At the same time, we will step up efforts to promote the family and to make the family the number one priority in everyone’s agenda, through our various events and outreach programmes. We hope the multi-prong approach adopted by our Council will enable us to address family issues and matters in a holistic and comprehensive manner. I am confident that the combination of experience and fresh perspectives will bring the Council’s role to a new level, as we address many of the complex issues facing the family, brought about by globalization and changes in our society which affect the way we work, live and play.”

8 Newly appointed member Ms Wong Fong Tze said, “I hope to channel to NFC feedback from the elderly, homemakers, professionals, as well as Generation Y on ways to co-create opportunities and platforms for family bonding, learning and growth. Together, we can bring forth a more cohesive community with a values-centred legacy for our future generations to inherit, build on and enjoy. ”

9 Mr Boon Yoon Chiang shared, “Family is the foundation of any society. Strong family units are key to a happy, progressive, harmonious and stable society.” Mr Peter Tan added, “As a Principal, I see both the tears of family trauma and hardship, and the joys of sound family living. In particular, I am concerned about the role that fathers play in the family. The father is not only the head of the household but, from my observations, the key to sound family life. I hope that my involvement can help enhance and promote the role of fathering. “

10 For Mr Mohd Ali Mahmood, "Families in Singapore face greater challenges today. Many of us have gone through the struggles between balancing career and building healthy family relationships at the same time. I have also encountered those who chose to forego building their own families out of fear of the commitments involved. I hope that the NFC can be the bridge that allows them to see the value and long-term positive outcomes of having strong and stable relationships within the family. "

11 On the contributions of the Council, Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, Minister of State for Community Development, Youth and Sports, said, “The family is the cornerstone of society. While family ties remain strong in Singapore, families are increasing facing challenges brought about by globalization and modernization. The National Family Council has been instrumental in championing the cause of the family. In the last 2 years, Council members have been tireless in rallying people and organizations to make time for family and to give priority to family on

their agenda. The Council also provided valuable inputs to Government in the recent Marriage and Parenthood Review. We are grateful for the effort of the past Council and look forward to Council's contributions in its new term. With so many eminent people on board, we can be sure that there will be more innovative ideas and useful inputs on family issues. I am looking forward to the Marriage Central that they are setting up soon."

12 Marriage Central is a major initiative of the National Family Council to provide one-stop information and counselling support for individuals tying the knot and for married couples seeking to strengthen their marriages.

13 Background on the National Family Council and its members and details of its key achievements are in the Annexes.

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Write-up on National Family Council

1 The National Family Council (NFC) was formed on 1 May 2006 to champion and promote the building of resilient family. The NFC took over the roles of the Family Matters! Singapore Committee, which was formed to promote marriage and family through public education initiatives; and the Committee on the Family, which had an advisory role on family policies and programmes.

2 The Council's Terms of Reference are:

- Promote the building of resilient families in Singapore;
- Be a consultative arm with the public and provide feedback to the Government on family policy, family education programmes, research and services;
- Engage key stakeholders in the people, private and public sectors to create a conducive environment for families; and
- Provide inputs on resource allocation to enhance the capacity and capability of the family service sector

3 The NFC comprises 18 members from the people, public and private sectors. The current NFC focuses on five key areas: strengthen core family values; strengthen the institution of marriage; meet parenting needs of young families; build strong foundation for teenagers and make family a leadership value. It will continue to initiate programmes to raise awareness on the importance of family, as well as provide opportunities for family members to bond through shared experiences. One such event is the National Family Celebrations. A list of past NFC's achievements is in Annex B.

4 For more information on the Council, please refer to its website at <http://www.nfc.org.sg/>. Its annual report can be found at http://www.nfc.org.sg/pdf/NFCAnnualReport_2007-08.pdf

5 Moving forward, the National Family Council intends to play an even larger role in promoting and strengthening families. For instance, it will be managing Marriage Central which will be set up by 3rd quarter of this year. It will continue to provide policy inputs on family matters, in addition to the many programmes and outreach activities that the Council organizes in collaboration with key stakeholders, to create a more pro-family environment.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NFC

Programmes spearheaded by NFC

- National Family Week 2007
- Re-branding of the National Family Week to the National Family Celebrations, and organising the NFC' 08
- “Think Family. Talk Family” Forum
- Launch of Thinkfamily.sg website
- Distinguished Speaker Series 2007
- “Celebrating Family: 101 stories of Love and Inspiration” Book
- We are Married! Celebrations and Marriage Convention 2008
- Marriage Central
- Focus group discussions with key stakeholders: – Provided feedback to Government on Marriage and Parenthood measures

Key programmes supported by NFC

- Singapore Parenting Congress 2006 and 2007
- Launch of Family.sg website
- “Make LOVE Happen” marriage enrichment cum fertility awareness Series
- “Children-Sunshine of Our Lives!” CD
- PWLE (Personal Work-life Effectiveness) Seminar for CEOs
- Training of Deputy Registrars of Marriages and Naib Kadis
- Back to School with Dad 2007
- “Born to Read, Read to Bond” Programme 2007
- FACES! – The Big Search for Little Ambassadors
- “I Love Children BUS”
- Resource materials – “Beautiful Baby, Wonderful Baby”, “BLISS- When baby makes three”
- Media Initiatives: “Happiness 2530” Radio Drama; “Celebrating Children” TV Commercial and Print Ads; My Dear Kin; Hey! Baby TV series; Sponsored editorials

Annex C

NATIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL (2008-2010)

CHAIRPERSON
(1) Mr Lim Soon Hock Chairman, Centre for Fathering Managing Director, PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd
DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON
(2) Mrs Joni Ong President, I Love Children Principal Consultant, OTi Consulting
HONORARY SECRETARY
(3) Mr Martin Tan Co-Founder and Executive Director, Halogen Foundation Singapore
MEMBERS
(4) Mr Boon Yoon Chiang Country Chairman, Jardine Matheson Group of Companies in Singapore, and Chairman/Managing Director of Jardine Matheson (Singapore) Ltd
(5) Ms Anita Fam Vice President, Asian Women's Welfare Association
(6) Mr Douglas Foo Chairman and CEO, Apex-Pal International Limited
(7) Ms Ho Shiong Yee Assistant General Secretary, United Workers of Petroleum Industry
(8) Mr Thirunal Karasu Managing Director, SingCorp International Pte Ltd

(9) Ms Natasha Kwan Deputy General Manager, OEM Multi-National & Alliance for Asia Pacific Region, Microsoft
(10) Mr Leng Chin Fai Director, Fei Yue Family Service Centre
(11) Mr Mohammed Ali Mahmood Executive Director, PPIS Jurong Family Service Centre
(12) Haji Pasuni Maulan Former Registrar, Registry of Muslim Marriages
(13) Mrs Mildred Tan Managing Director, Ernst & Young Associates Pte Ltd
(14) Mr Peter Tan Principal, Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Road)
(15) Mr Robert Tan Director, Alternative Travel and Tours
(16) Ms Toh Hwee Tin Director, Family Development Unit, National Trades Union Congress
(17) Ms Wong Fong Tze Vice-President (Corporate Communications), PSA Corporation Ltd
(18) Mr Anthony Yip Director, Far East Organisation (Retail Management)