



*Media Release*

## **SINGAPORE TO MARK UN INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CO-OPERATIVES WITH LIMITED EDITION STAMP SERIES – THE FIRST ON SINGAPORE CO-OPERATIVES**

**SINGAPORE, 30 May 2012** - Singapore will mark the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives (IYC) 2012 with a series of day-long celebratory events on 9 June – starting with the launch that day, of five Limited Edition stamps to mark 86 years of co-operatives in Singapore.

The first-of-its-kind stamp series will be launched by President Tony Tan at the Marina Barrage where the IYC 2012 will be celebrated by 15,000 members of the co-operative movement, their families and the public, at a large-scale event, 'Co-opalicoouz'.

Commissioned by the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) and issued by SingPost, the stamps are legal tender, with each tracing the legacy of the co-operative movement, focusing on milestones in Singapore:

1. 1844: Founding of the Rochdale Co-operative Principles in England, of which, Singapore co-operatives still uphold
2. 1925: Birth of Singapore's First Co-operative, the Singapore Government Servants' Co-operative Thrift and Loan Society (currently known as The Singapore Government Staff Credit Co-operative Society).
3. 1969: Birth of the NTUC Co-operatives, inspired by Singapore's founding fathers, the late Deputy Prime Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee, and Singapore's late President Mr C.V. Devan Nair.
4. 1980: Birth of the Singapore National Co-operative Federation, the national body for the Singapore co-operative movement, through an Act of Parliament
5. 2012: Singapore celebrates the United Nations International Year of Co-operative

The stamp issue is the result of the combined efforts of the SNCF, National Archives of Singapore, Singapore Post and Singapore Tourism Board.

Mr Chan Tee Seng, SNCF Chairman, believes that the launch of the limited edition stamp series and First Day Covers is a pivotal step towards raising awareness for Singapore's co-operatives.

“We are delighted to have partnered SingPost to produce Singapore’s first-ever set of legal tender stamp series, as this gives sterling recognition to the significance of the co-operative movement’s impact on society. In Singapore, more than 1 in 3 Singaporeans are members of co-operatives. The IYC is an opportunity to bring people together, raise public awareness for our cause, and demonstrate that by coming together as one, we can do much more for ourselves and for Singapore.”

The general public who purchase the Limited Edition co-operative stamps from SingPost booth at the Marina Barrage will get to also see two exhibitions being staged there as part of the Co-opaliciouz event of IYC 2012: the first is the co-operative stamps exhibition and the second is the SNCF’s Hot Shots photo exhibition, showcasing the winning entries of photographers from across the world who best captured the essence and spirit of co-operation on film. Held over one and a half months, the competition had garnered 583 online entries, 613 print entries and more than 8,500 votes. Entries came in from as far away as Poland.

SingPost spokesperson Peggy Teo, Assistant Vice President (Philatelic & Stamps) said that the issuance of the commemorative co-operative stamps is timely to recognise the 1.4 million members of co-operatives in Singapore and to commemorate Singapore’s celebration of IYC 2012.

“Co-operatives in Singapore contribute significantly at both the economic and social levels. We hope that this stamp series will further raise public awareness of co-operatives and that stamp collectors and the general public will be inspired by the principles of the co-operative movement and its national contributions to Singapore,” she said.

Ms Dolly Goh, CEO of the SNCF said that co-operatives improve the lives of Singapore Residents.

“Singapore faces increasing global competition, an ageing population and widening income disparity. The self-empowerment value and principle of co-operatives with its focus on self-help is as relevant today as it was nearly nine decades ago,” she said.

Ms Goh said the theme for the Co-opaliciouz event is ‘Come together as One’.

Aligning with this spirit, attendees of the event will come together for a mass reading activity of one of the Co-operative Children’s Books by Emily Lim, encouraging Singapore’s young to develop the character building value of co-operation.

The general public can buy the Limited Edition, First Day Covers, on two days. The first day purchase will be at local post offices on 31 May. The second day will be on 9 June at the Marina Barrage where the stamps series will be officially launched by the President.

Pre-orders can be made online at [shop.vpost.com.sg](http://shop.vpost.com.sg).

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## Background information on Limited Edition co-operative stamp series



### 1844: Founders of the Rochdale Principles

The stamp features members of the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in Rochdale England who jointly founded on the Rochdale Principles. These principles are a set of values and ideals for co-operative enterprises, which form the basis on which co-operatives around the world operate to this day. The founding established the beginnings of the concept behind modern co-operatives.

### 1925: Birth of Singapore's First Co-operative

The Singapore Government Servants' Co-operative Thrift and Loan Society was Singapore's first co-operative, founded on 7th October 1925 against the backdrop of profiteering money lenders. This co-operative offered safe banking and affordable loans to employees in the Civil Service, Statutory Boards and Government-Owned Companies. A testament to the sustainable business model of co-operatives, the credit co-operative continues to champion its social mission today, encouraging thrift among members to save for a bright future, while providing loans at reasonable rates for members of the Civil Service.

### 1969: Birth of the NTUC Co-operatives

As a result of the NTUC seminar on "The Modernization of the Labor Movement", the NTUC Co-operatives were born. Inspired by Singapore's founding fathers, the late Deputy Prime Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee, and the country's late President Mr C.V. Devan Nair, these co-operatives were founded to help raise the living standards for the common man, provide access to affordable essential products and services, and help each worker 'stretch the dollar'. Some of these co-operatives continue to make significant impact at a national level.

### **1980: Birth of the Singapore National Co-operative Federation**

By an Act of Parliament, the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) was registered on 18 September 1980 as the national body for the Singapore's Co-operative Movement.

Its mission is to promote and develop co-operatives as sustainable enterprises that address social and economic needs through the principle of self and mutual help so as to foster a more resilient society.

### **2012: Singapore Celebrates the International Year of Co-operatives**

The United Nations (UN) proclaimed 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives, in recognition of the exemplary model of co-operative enterprises, through which a better world may be realized. Led by SNCF, Singapore joins the world community in celebrating the IYC through a year-long series of programs that aims to bring together co-operators and families, to raise the level of awareness and educate the public about the social and economic contribution of co-operatives.