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Green Champions Set to Spread Eco-Messages

Aleksandar Duric, Isabelle Li and C Kunalan among athletes who will promote joint initiative by SNOC and SEC

Singapore, 8 July 2013 – A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Singapore National Olympic Council (SNOC) and the Singapore Environment Council (SEC) today to launch the “Green Champions” programme to leverage on the popularity of sports to promote environmental awareness and sustainable development to the sports industry, from athletes, officials to sports administration offices.

Witnessed by Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, Acting Minister for Manpower, Senior Minister of State for National Development and Ms Isabella Loh, Chairman of SEC, the ceremony was held at the YOG Gallery @ Singapore Sports Museum.

Mr Chris Chan, Secretary General of SNOC, said: “The International Olympic Committee (IOC) regards the environment as one of the fundamental objectives of the Olympic Movement, and is the third dimension of Olympism alongside sport and culture. This landmark partnership, being the first of its kind between the sports and the environment sectors in Singapore, is a win-win situation for all, providing a more sustainable future for all to enjoy a better and more active lifestyle. After all, the types of sport we can enjoy, is dependent on our air and water quality, and on our environment as a whole.”

Added Mr Jose Raymond, Executive Director of the SEC: “Sports plays a part in many of our lives and people do look up to our athletes as role models. This partnership between SNOC and SEC will complement each other, as we are able to cast a wide net with no limiting boundaries, to extend the awareness of environmental issues. This will increase SEC’s outreach towards a wider audience, raise the consciousness of the population to a whole new level, such that they cheer not just for their teams or their country, but for the environmental cause.”

The MoU will set the framework for the “Green Champions” programme. Under this programme, athletes like Mr U. K. Shyam, Mr C. Kunalan, Mr Amirudin Jamal (Athletics), Ms Isabelle Li (Table Tennis), Mr Delvin Goh (Basketball) and Mr Aleksandar Duric (Football) will serve as role models to embody the association between sports and the environment. They will champion sustainable development of sports in Singapore and will also deliver conservation messages to members of the public and to the sports fraternity.

Mr Duric, Tampines Rovers forward and a former national footballer, who has scored 27 goals for Singapore in 54 appearances, said: “I am very honoured to be chosen to be the pioneer of this initiative. Sports is part of many of our daily routines, and we all have icons we look up to. Caring for

the environment is also very important to the future of this planet we live in, and we all can play a part in looking after it.”

Added Mr C. Kunalan, who was Singapore’s holder of the 100m record from 1968 to 2001: “I have had the chance to meet many people in the course of my sporting career. I have competed against fellow athletes, and may have influenced people to enjoy sports. With the Green Champions programme, I hope to influence people to enjoy our environment. We may have many sports to choose from, but we have only one Earth.”

Another initiative involves “Go Green” seminars and workshops organised with SNOC for athletes and officials, to promote sustainable habits for athletes heading overseas for training or major games. Mr Amirudin Jamal, a member of Singapore’s 4x100m sprint team, said: “I am really glad to be a part of this programme. As a relay runner, I appreciate how every individual plays an important role in contributing to the success of the entire team as a whole. Similarly, the relationship between individuals and the environment will be positively amplified if each person would play his or her part to care for our environment.”

To reduce the use of disposable or environmentally unsustainable materials during training and competitions, SEC will produce “Eco-Kits” comprising environmentally preferred products for overseas-bound Singapore athletes. Ms Isabelle Li, Singapore’s national paddler who won a Silver medal at the 2010 Youth Olympic Games, said: “I see a great opportunity to touch the lives of people, through sports and the environment. My paddle can now serve a dose of green advice, and reach out to the masses, along with the message of good sportsmanship. People should care for the environment they live in, and I am glad that I can play a part in promoting this programme.”

**** END OF MEDIA RELEASE ****

Please refer to Appendix A for the bio data of the Green Champions.



About the Singapore Environment Council

Established in 1995, the Singapore Environment Council (SEC) is an independently managed, non-government organisation that nurtures, facilitates and co-ordinates environmental causes in Singapore. SEC’s work is founded on three pillars of action – Firstly, partnership with the people, private and public sectors of Singaporean society, to nurture a culture aligned with sustainable development concepts. Secondly, SEC rewards environmental excellence through awards schemes and product endorsement programmes, such as the Singapore Green Labelling Scheme. Thirdly, the SEC collaborates with partners to develop and implement training and learning programmes to build competencies in environmental sustainability within companies, thus keeping our business leaders ahead of the curve. Visit our website at www.sec.org.sg.

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SINGAPORE

About The Singapore National Olympic Council

The Singapore National Olympic Council (SNOC) is the national non-profit organization that coordinates the selection of Singaporean athletes for competition at the major games such as the Olympics, the Asian Games, the Commonwealth Games and the South East Asian Games. Singapore's involvement in the Games is resolutely anchored in the Olympic ideals that were first espoused by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, in 1894.

For more information about the "Green Champions" programme, please contact:

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Appendix A: Bio Data of Green Champions

Mr C. Kunalan (Athletics)

One of the most recognisable track and field athletes in Singapore, Mr C. Kunalan's achievements can be traced as far back as 1966. He won a silver medal for Singapore in the 100m sprint at the 5th Asian Games, missing the gold by only a fraction of a second (0.01sec). A photo finish in 1970 again prevented him from being the fastest man in Asia. Despite having the same timing as the other two sprinters, he was awarded the bronze medal.

Mr Kunalan also participated in two Olympic and two Commonwealth Games. Although he did not win any medals, his 10.38 second (electronic timing) for the 100m sprint (set in the 1968 Mexico Olympics) stood as the National Record for 33 years.

His finest sporting moment came in the 1969 Southeast Asian Peninsular (SEAP) Games where he won three gold medals for the 100m, 200m and the 4x400m relay while competing against the best sprinters in the region. He was awarded the Sportsman of the Year Award for two consecutive years in 1968 and 1969.

Mr K, affectionately known among friends and colleagues, first retired from competition in 1970 after the 6th Asian Games. A comeback in 1973 ensued and thereafter anchored the 4 x 400m team to a gold medal in the 1975 SEAP Games. After retiring from major competitions in 1970, he continued his association with athletics coaching his school athletes. In 1981, at the age of 39, he ran the 400m in 48.8 seconds at the Swifts Club Annual Championship at the National Stadium, proving that he had not lost his mettle.

For the next 10 years, his primary focus was his career as a lecturer at the Institute of Education. His stint as the National Sprint Coach from 1993 till 1996 enabled the National sprint team to break the national 4x100m record in 1994, a record which Mr Kunalan helped set in 1974 at the Asian Games. Currently, he is an Advisor at the Singapore Athletic Association.

With his humble demeanour and affable manners, this national sprint icon is an ideal role model for athletes.

Mr U.K. Shyam (Athletics)

Mr U.K. Shyam (born 1 July 1976), was a top Singaporean athlete who holds the Singaporean national record over the 100m with a timing of 10.37s. He broke the 33- year old record of 10.38s (set by Singaporean sprint legend, Mr C. Kunalan) at the World University Games in Beijing in 2001.

He equalled his own national record soon after at the 21st Southeast Asian Games in Kuala Lumpur, and his 10.37s still stands to date as the fastest ever SEA Games silver medal timing. He was an Individual Award Recipient for Sporting Singapore Inspiration Awards in 2006 and winner of the Public Sports Medal in 2011.

After his studies at St. Andrew's Secondary School and Raffles Junior College, Mr Shyam went on to do a double degree in Philosophy and Political Science at the National University of Singapore. He was the first athlete to be placed on Singapore Sports Council's inaugural Athlete Career Training Programme that was launched and conferred by then Deputy Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong. He has retired as an athlete and is currently a lecturer at Hwa Chong Junior College.

Mr Amirudin Jamal (Athletics)

Mr Amirudin Jamal is a relay runner who rose to prominence after being part of the team that finished runners-up in the Men's 4 x 100m relay during the 2009 SEA Games in Laos, breaking the national record for the event with a timing of 39.82 seconds in the process. This achievement was reached even though Singapore was the only country that did not field full-time athletes.

Mr Jamal, a Psychology major at the National University of Singapore, first picked up running in Primary Four when he took part in a School Sports Day event that year. The following year he was selected to represent the school in Primary Five for a running event. Although he did not even make the semi-finals then, he was drawn to sprinting and the rush that it brought. Since then, he has been actively competing in amateur athletics at the national level since he was 11. At the 2012 Thailand Open Track & Field Championships, Mr Jamal clocked a Personal Best time of 21.54sec.

Mr Aleksandar Duric (Football)

Mr Aleksandar Duric is a Bosnian-born Singaporean professional association football player who plays as a striker for the Tampines Rovers in the S. League. In the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Mr Duric represented Bosnia and Herzegovina in the C-1 500 m event. In his 42 years, he has experienced poverty, the loss of his mother to war and years of separation from his family because of the Balkans conflict.

Initially he played as a goalkeeper in his home-town club FK Sloga Doboj. He debuted for the Singapore national team on 9 November 2007, against Tajikistan in the first leg of the second round of the AFC 2010 World Cup qualifiers, making an immediate impact as he scored both goals in a 2-0 victory.

Today, at age 42, he is still a first-choice striker for Tampines Rovers and remains one of the fittest players in the S.League, an amazing feat for someone his age.

Enjoying a stellar football career, Mr Duric has won seven S-League titles with three different teams and is the reigning S.League Player of the Year, having won the award in 2007 and 2008. He received the People's Choice Award in 2007, as well as bagging the RHB Top Scorer Award in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Mr Duric represented the Singapore national team 54 times, scoring 27 goals. The lanky 1.92m left-footer enjoyed possibly his finest hour as he inspired the Lions to clinch the 2012 AFF Suzuki Cup with a 3-2 aggregate win over Thailand in the final.

Mr Delvin Goh (Basketball)

Mr Delvin Goh is an up-and-coming basketball star and is earmarked to be the cornerstone of the Singapore men's national team in the next 10 to 15 years, starring in the U18 SEABA Tournament held in Singapore in August 2012. At the tender age of 16 years old, Mr Goh signed a 7-month contract with the Singapore Slingers, cementing his status as the youngest player on the Slingers' roster.

Ms Isabelle Li (Table Tennis)

At 19 years of age, Ms Isabelle Li is one of Singapore's rising young table tennis stars and is slated to reach the very top of the sport on the international stage. In 2010, Ms Li clinched a silver medal in the inaugural Youth Olympic Games held in Singapore, as well as another silver medal in the Women's Singles category at the 2011 SEA Games held in Indonesia. 2012 capped an eventful year for her as well as she clinched gold in the Junior Girls' Singles and Doubles category at the SEA Junior Championships and ITTF Global Junior Circuit held in Indonesia and New Zealand respectively.

Ms Li is well known for her defensive style of play, one that relies on long rallies that will either force her opponents into making mistakes or invite them to attack her.

Away from the table tennis exploits, Ms Li is currently pursuing her diploma course in Sports and Leisure Management at Republic Polytechnic.