



MEDIA RELEASE

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SINGAPORE DEEPENS TIES WITH VIETNAM THROUGH HO CHI MINH STATUE AND COMMEMORATIVE MARKER

Singapore, 28 September 2011 – Singapore's Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts Dr Yaacob Ibrahim and Vietnam's President Truong Tan Sang, who is on an official visit to Singapore, unveiled a statue of Ho Chi Minh – the founding father of modern Vietnam, at the Asian Civilisations Museum Green (ACM Green) today.

The statue forms part of the existing Ho Chi Minh Marker on the ACM Green, which comprises a storyboard detailing Ho Chi Minh's significant contributions to Vietnam's independence and his visits to Singapore. The addition of the bronze statue signifies a reaffirmation of both cultural and bilateral ties between Singapore and Vietnam.

To cater to Vietnamese tourists and the growing community in Singapore, a Vietnamese translation of the marker text has also been included. The enhanced marker serves as a visual reminder of Ho Chi Minh's struggles and accomplishments in his fight for Vietnam's independence.

The Vietnamese hero of national liberation and the first President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh is much revered by the Vietnamese for his vision and determination to unite the country and chart a course for self-government. Records showed that Ho Chi Minh visited Singapore twice in May 1930 and again in January 1933 during his numerous trips around the region to rally support for his cause.

In 2008, the Ho Chi Minh Marker was erected at the ACM Green as the second marker in the National Heritage Board's (NHB) *Friends to Our Shores* series, which commemorates eminent overseas personalities who had a connection to Singapore. The unveiling ceremony at that time was held in conjunction with NHB's first ASEAN country-themed festival, *Vietnam Festival*, and to celebrate 35 years of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Vietnam.

Today, the enhanced marker is a result of the joint efforts of the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and NHB. It will not only bring our people and visitors

together to share and learn about our history, but will also enrich the public's understanding of Singapore's unique role in regional and world history.

For more information, please refer to the attached documents:

– Factsheet on the Ho Chi Minh Statue and Commemorative Marker

- ANNEX 1 – NHB's *Friends to Our Shores* markers
- ANNEX 2 – Text and poem on the Ho Chi Minh Marker

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About the National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) champions the development and promotion of a vibrant cultural and heritage sector in Singapore. It makes heritage enriching, relevant and accessible to all through staging innovative programmes and forging partnerships. NHB leverages on technology and refreshing new approaches to make heritage more dynamic, alive and exciting. It also manages both national and public museums, the National Archives of Singapore, the Preservation of Monuments Board and the Heritage Conservation Centre. NHB was formed on 1 August 1993 as a statutory board under the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA). Please visit www.nhb.gov.sg for more information.

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Factsheet on the Ho Chi Minh Statue and Commemorative Marker

Unveiling of Ho Chi Minh Statue and Commemorative Marker

Singapore's Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts Dr Yaacob Ibrahim and Vietnam's President Truong Tan Sang unveiled a statue of Ho Chi Minh – the founding father of modern Vietnam, on 28 September 2011 at the Asian Civilisations Museum Green (ACM Green).

The statue forms part of the Ho Chi Minh Marker currently on the ACM Green, which comprises a storyboard detailing Ho Chi Minh's early life, political activities, significant contributions to Vietnam's independence and his visits to Singapore. (Please refer to ANNEX 2 for more details) The addition of the bronze statue signifies a reaffirmation of both cultural and bilateral ties between Singapore and Vietnam.

The bronze statue was created by accomplished Vietnamese sculptor Trần Văn Lắm, and commissioned by the Ho Chi Minh Museum in Hanoi. A poem by Ho Chi Minh is inscribed at the back of the marker.

A result of the joint efforts of the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and NHB, the enhanced marker will serve as a visual reminder of Ho Chi Minh's accomplishments and struggles to achieve independence for Vietnam. To cater to Vietnamese tourists and the growing community in Singapore, a Vietnamese translation of the marker text has also been included.

Background

In 2008, the Ho Chi Minh Marker was erected at the ACM Green as part of National Heritage Board's (NHB) *Friends to Our Shores* series of markers (please refer to ANNEX 1), which commemorate eminent overseas personalities who contributed much to his or her home country and are revered by his or her people. These persons must also have visited Singapore, either as a visitor or diplomat.

The ceremony, officiated by Singapore's then Minister for Foreign Affairs George Yeo and Vietnam's former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem, was held in conjunction with NHB's first ASEAN country-themed festival,

Vietnam Festival, and to celebrate 35 years of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Vietnam.

Nguyen Sinh Cung or Ho Chi Minh (1890 – 1969), was born in the village of Kim Lien, Nam Dan district, Nghe An province in Central Viet Nam. As a young boy, he was introduced to the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity through the writings of French thinkers. In 1911, at the age of 21, he left Viet Nam for Europe as a cook on board a French steamship. Over the next two years, he travelled to Europe, Africa, South America, and the United States, where he witnessed the poverty, discrimination and injustices in these lands. These episodes, together with his early introduction to revolutionary thinking, fired him up with ideals of national self-determination.

Ho Chi Minh's convictions compelled him to participate in the establishment of the Association of Annamite Patriots in 1917 to seek redress for colonial injustices. Ho Chi Minh stopped by Singapore briefly in May 1930 when he was sent to preside over the creation of Communist Parties in Siam, Malaya and Singapore. In the same year, Ho Chi Minh founded the Communist Party of Viet Nam (*Dong Cong San Viet Nam*) in Hong Kong. In 1941, Ho Chi Minh returned to Viet Nam for the first time in 30 years to form a new independence movement called the Viet Minh. With the end of World War II in August 1945, the Viet Minh established the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. In 1945, Ho Chi Minh was elected as the first President of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, a post he held till his passing on 2 September 1969.

NHB's 'Friends to Our Shores' Markers

NHB's *Friends to Our Shores* series of markers commemorates eminent personalities from abroad who had a connection to Singapore, by erecting a marker dedicated to the person. The personality must be revered by his or her people back home, had contributed much to the country of origin and had links to Singapore, either as a visitor or diplomat.

Highlighting the significant role that Singapore has played in regional as well as world history, this series aims to increase Singaporeans' understanding of our history and how we are intricately linked to the region. It is part of NHB's ongoing efforts to forge closer heritage collaborations with our regional and international neighbours.

Started in 2004, three personalities have been featured other than Ho Chi Minh. They are: Joseph Conrad, a Polish-born English writer (2004); Dr Jose Rizal, national hero of the Philippines (2008); and Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China's policies of economic reform and openness to the world (2010).

- **Joseph Conrad marker (2004)** – a Polish-born English writer who made Singapore and the whole of Southeast Asia better known to the world. This plaque was officially unveiled by H.E. Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland, on 24 February 2004.
Refer to: http://heritagetrails.sg/content/516/Joseph_Conrad_Plaque.html
- **Ho Chi Minh marker (2008)** -- On 20 May 2008, Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem unveiled a heritage marker dedicated to Ho Chi Minh – the father of modern Vietnam, at the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) Green. This was held to commemorate the 35th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Vietnam.
- **Dr Jose Rizal marker (2008)** – In an affirmation of the strong friendship between the Republic of the Philippines and Singapore, President S R Nathan unveiled a heritage marker dedicated to Dr Jose Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, on 19 June 2008. The ceremony at the ACM Green was witnessed by the Philippines' Secretary of Education, Mr Jesli Lapus and Chairman of the National Heritage Board Professor Tommy Koh.

- **Deng Xiaoping marker (2010)** – Unveiled on 14 November 2010 in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and China, the Deng Xiaoping marker is the fourth in the *Friends to Our Shores* series.

For this series of markers, the NHB works closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the respective foreign embassies.

To give each marker a unique identity, each marker usually includes an artwork created by an artist from the country of origin. This also provides the overseas counterparts a platform to showcase their artists. For example, the Joseph Conrad and Jose Rizal markers include a medallion crafted by a leading sculptor from Poland and the Philippines respectively. The artwork is sponsored by the respective embassies located in Singapore. A famous quote by the personality and his/her signature are also incorporated into the marker.

Text on the Ho Chi Minh Marker (English)

HO CHI MINH (1890 – 1969)

Nguyen Sinh Cung or Ho Chi Minh as he is known today, was born on 19 May 1890 in the village of Kim Lien, Nam Dan district, Nghe An province in Annam in Central Viet Nam. Born to a government official in the then-French colony of Viet Nam and a resourceful mother who was more of the family's bread winner, Ho was the youngest of three children.

Ho was introduced at a young age to the ideas of Vietnamese modernists and French thinkers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau and Charles Louis de Secondat Montesquieu. He first heard about the lofty principles of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* (English: Liberty, equality and fraternity) as a boy of 13 and longed to see the France that pronounced them.

In 1911, at the age of 21, he left Viet Nam for Europe as a cook on board a French steamship. Over the next two years, he travelled to Europe, Africa, South America, and the United States where he witnessed the poverty, discrimination and injustices in these lands for himself. These episodes, together with his early introduction to revolutionary thinking, fired him up with ideals of national self-determination.

Ho's convictions compelled him to participate in the establishment of the Association of *Annamite Patriots* in 1917 to seek redress for colonial injustices. At the Versailles Conference in June 1919, he presented his *Demands of the Annamite People* to the Allied Powers, seeking autonomy, equal rights and political freedom for Viet Nam. He signed off as Nguyen Ai Quoc, (Nguyen the Patriot).

In 1925, Ho wrote a book detailing the colonial exploitation of his homeland and travelled to parts of Asia with Vietnamese exiles to organise revolutionary movements. He stopped by Singapore briefly in May 1930.

In the same year, Ho founded the Communist Party of Viet Nam (*Dang Cong San Viet Nam*) in Hong Kong. For his revolutionary activities, he was jailed by the British from 1931 to 1933 when he was finally allowed to leave. He attempted to head to the Soviet Union via Singapore, sailing into Singapore in January 1933 but was immediately deported back to Hong Kong.

In 1941, Ho returned to Viet Nam for the first time in 30 years to form a new independence movement called the Viet Minh. He also changed his name to Ho Chi Minh, (Bringer of light). With the end of World War II in August 1945, the Viet Minh established the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, following the successful August 1945 Revolution led by the Communist Party of Viet Nam.

In 1945, Ho Chi Minh was elected as the first President of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, a post he held until he passed away on 2 September 1969. Six years later, the two parts of Viet Nam were reunited as the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, thus fulfilling President Ho's dream.

In 1987, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recognised Ho Chi Minh as Vietnamese hero of national liberation and a great man of culture.

Text on the Ho Chi Minh Marker (Vietnamese)

CHỦ TỊCH HỒ CHÍ MINH (1890-1969)

Chủ tịch Hồ Chí Minh sinh ngày 19-5-1890 tại làng Kim Liên, tỉnh Nghệ An, miền Trung Việt Nam. Xuất thân từ một gia đình Nho giáo vào thời kỳ Việt Nam là thuộc địa của Pháp. Hồ Chí Minh là người con út trong ba người con.

Tuổi niên thiếu Hồ Chí Minh đã được làm quen với những tư tưởng của các nhà cách tân Việt Nam và những nhà tư tưởng mới của Pháp như Rousseau và Montesquieu. Khi là cậu bé 13 tuổi, lần đầu tiên Người nghe được những nguyên tắc cao cả bằng tiếng Pháp về Tự do, Bình đẳng, Bác ái và nóng lòng được thấy nước Pháp, đất nước đã đưa ra những nguyên tắc cao cả đó.

Năm 1911, vào tuổi 21, Người đã rời Việt Nam sang châu Âu, với nghề làm bếp trên một chiếc tàu thủy chạy bằng hơi nước của Pháp. Những năm tiếp theo, Người đã đến châu Âu, châu Phi, Nam Mỹ và nước Mỹ. Ở những nơi đó, Hồ Chí Minh đã chứng kiến cảnh bần hàn, phân biệt và bất công. Những điều đó cùng với việc sớm tiếp xúc những tư tưởng cách mạng đã thổi bùng trong ông ý chí tìm ra con đường giải phóng dân tộc.

Những nhận thức của Hồ Chí Minh đã thôi thúc Người sáng lập Hội những người An Nam yêu nước vào năm 1917, để chống lại sự bất công của chủ nghĩa thực dân. Tại Hội nghị Véc-xây, tháng 6 năm 1919, Người đã đưa ra những Yêu sách của nhân dân An Nam trước các cường quốc đồng minh, đòi quyền tự trị, quyền bình đẳng và tự do chính trị cho Việt Nam. Người đã ký tên là Nguyễn Ái Quốc (Nguyễn yêu nước).

Năm 1925, Hồ Chí Minh viết cuốn sách Bản án chế độ thực dân Pháp, trong đó tố cáo và lên án bản chất chủ nghĩa thực dân. Sau đó, Người đã qua một số nước châu Á với một số người Việt Nam cùng chí hướng để tổ chức các phong trào cách mạng. Người đã dừng chân ở Singapore một thời gian ngắn vào tháng 5 năm 1930. Cùng năm này, Hồ Chí Minh đã sáng lập Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam tại Hồng Kông.

Do những hoạt động cách mạng của mình, Người đã bị chính quyền Anh bắt giam từ năm 1931 đến năm 1933. Sau đó, Người được trả tự do. Người đã cố gắng vượt biển về Liên Xô qua đường Singapore. Người đến Singapore vào tháng 1 năm 1933 nhưng sau đó phải quay trở lại Hồng Kông.

Năm 1941, lần đầu tiên sau 30 năm, Hồ Chí Minh trở về Việt Nam để tổ chức phong trào độc lập mới gọi là Việt Minh. Người đổi tên thành Hồ Chí Minh. Tháng 8 năm 1945, Cách mạng tháng Tám thành công, nước Việt Nam Dân chủ Cộng hòa ra đời.

Năm 1945, Hồ Chí Minh được bầu là Chủ tịch đầu tiên của nước Việt Nam Dân chủ Cộng hòa. Người giữ chức vụ này cho tới khi qua đời vào ngày 2 tháng 9 năm 1969. Sáu năm sau ngày Người mất, hai miền đất nước Việt Nam được thống nhất trọn vẹn thành nước Cộng hòa xã hội chủ nghĩa Việt Nam đúng như mong muốn của Người.

Năm 1987, Tổ chức Giáo dục, Khoa học và Văn hóa Liên Hợp Quốc (UNESCO) đã tôn vinh Hồ Chí Minh là anh hùng giải phóng dân tộc Việt Nam, Danh nhân Văn hóa thế giới.

Poem by Ho Chi Minh on the Ho Chi Minh Marker (English and Vietnamese)

**LISTENING TO THE SOUND
OF RICE-POUNDING**

**Under the pestle how terribly the rice suffers!
But it comes out of the pounding as white as cotton.
In this world the same process happens to humans:
Hard trials turn them into diamonds bright.**

HO CHI MINH, 1942

NGHE TIẾNG GIÃ GẠO

**Gạo đem vào giã bao đau đớn,
Gạo giã xong rồi, trắng tựa bông;
Sống ở trên đời người cũng vậy,
Gian nan rèn luyện mới thành công.**

HỒ CHÍ MINH, 1942