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## **HEALTH PROMOTION BOARD AWARDS 10 MARKETS AND FOOD CENTRES THE BLUE RIBBON FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN PROMOTING A SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT**

### ***Meanwhile, a community anti-smoking advocacy project by HPB takes off***

For leading the way in creating a smoke-free environment, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) is awarding the Blue Ribbon to 10 markets and food centres across the island.

2. A symbol of the anti-tobacco movement, particularly the prevention of second-hand smoke, the Blue Ribbon initiative is part of the larger smoke-free movement that the World Health Organization (WHO) Western Pacific Region has embarked on.
3. Recognising that a smoke-free environment effectively minimises public exposure to second-hand smoke, the WHO is encouraging countries to take on the Blue Ribbon campaign.
4. With HPB's launch of a local Blue Ribbon initiative, Singapore becomes the first country regionally to adopt this initiative on a nationwide scale.
5. The first 10 recipients of Singapore's Blue Ribbon are markets and food centres from all over the city-state, which are recognised for their commitment to create smoke-free environments.
6. Although all are allowed to have a smoking corner, these 10 markets and food centres voluntarily removed their demarcated smoking zones because they believe in the importance of tobacco control and the prevention of harmful second-hand or third-hand smoke. They are also convinced that being smoke-free will have little impact on their business.

7. “While Singapore has one of the lowest smoking prevalence in the world, recent trends suggest a rise in the prevalence, although the vast majority of Singaporeans are non-smokers. This is why it is important to ‘de-normalise’ smoking by creating voluntary smoke-free environments to send the message that smoke-free living is the default lifestyle. A bottom-up approach engaging ordinary Singaporeans to step forward and promote tobacco-free living is one of the ways to build such smoke-free environments,” said Dr Amy Khor, Minister of State for Health.

8. “These 10 recipients of the Blue Ribbon award have led the way by being the first to support such a smoke-free movement. Several of them have also indicated that their support of this movement has not affected their business. HPB will continue to support them in their commitment to create smoke-free environments. In addition to providing signages, posters and banners to distinguish them as health promoting premises for Singaporeans keen to visit smoke-free markets and food centres, HPB’s Health Ambassadors, who are trained to help smokers quit smoking, will also be deployed at various community touchpoints island-wide,” said Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, HPB.

9. HPB will work with more hawker centres and also coffee shops to encourage them to support the smoke-free movement. To complement this, HPB will, as part of a ground-up smoke-free advocacy project, train grassroots organisations and Health Ambassadors to work the ground at various neighbourhoods to promote a smoke-free lifestyle as well as voluntary no-smoking zones at void decks and common corridors.

10. To foster community solidarity in creating a smoke-free estate, these ambassadors will go door to door, handing out Blue Ribbons and quit kits, to support the Blue Ribbon smoke-free movement as well as help smokers quit.

11. The Blue Ribbon initiative is in line with Singapore’s role as a regional thought leader in tobacco control, as Singapore prepares to host the 15<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH) from 20 to 24 March this year. An iconic platform for the global pursuit of greater solidarity against tobacco use, WCTOH is where international experts and leaders congregate for debate as well as sharing of perspectives.

ANNEX A: List of Blue Ribbon award winners

ANNEX B: The 15<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH)

**BLUE RIBBON AWARD WINNERS**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Markets and Food Centres</b>	<b>Address</b>
1	ABC Brickworks Market & Food Centre	Blk 6 Jalan Bukit Merah
2	Adam Road Food Centre	2 Adam Road
3	Albert Centre Market & Food Centre	Blk 270 Queen Street
4	Blk 79 and 79A Circuit Road Food Centre	Blk 79/79A Circuit Road
5	Blk 89 Circuit Road Food Centre	Blk 89 Circuit Road
6	Ghim Moh Market & Food Centre	Blk 20 Ghim Moh Road
7	Kaki Bukit 511 Market & Food Centre	Blk 511 Bedok North St 3
8	Kovan Hougang Market & Food Centre	Blk 209 Hougang St 21
9	Upper Boon Keng Market & Food Centre	Blk 17 Upper Boon Keng Road
10	Tampines Round Market & Food Centre	Blk 137 Tampines St 11

**The 15<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH)**

Singapore is constantly pushing tobacco control measures forward, and is preparing to host for the first time the 15th World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH) from 20 to 24 March 2012. HPB will organise both the pre-conference and conference, as well as lead the dialogue on tobacco control, for some 2,500 international delegates from around the world. The conference theme, Towards a Tobacco-Free World: Planning Globally, Acting Locally, underscores the emphasis placed on WCTOH as a platform not only for global strategies, but also for plans that acknowledge regional and local realities in the fight against tobacco.

The Health Promotion Board, Singapore is the national driver for tobacco control programmes and strategies, and has consistently kept Singapore's smoking prevalence at one of the lowest within the region by adopting a holistic approach towards tobacco control.

The agenda for both the conference is being built towards understanding the global challenges to tobacco control and to developing plans for tackling the problem at a regional and country level. The conference will also develop a roadmap towards a tobacco free world through the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO FCTC).