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MEDIA RELEASE

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YISHUN POND MAKEOVER TO CREATE NEW GREEN LUNG

Singapore – Work to transform Yishun Pond and its surroundings into a multi-generational, health-promoting garden begins today with a groundbreaking ceremony. This is part of a larger plan to revitalise Yishun town under the Housing Development Board's Remaking Our Heartland (ROH) initiative.

2 Yishun Pond and its surroundings will be rejuvenated with new community spaces and gardens to create a unique waterfront park for Yishun residents and the patients of Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH). The project is a multi-agency collaboration between Alexandra Health, National Parks Board (NParks), PUB the national water agency and Housing Development Board (HDB). Completion is expected in the fourth quarter of 2011.

3 The driving philosophy behind the transformation of Yishun Pond is the idea of placemaking, which encourages the creation of public spaces to promote people's health and well being as well as foster a sense of community. It is also part of PUB's Active, Beautiful, Clean Waters (ABC Waters) Programme, which seeks to transform Singapore's water bodies into beautiful and clean streams, rivers and lakes, creating new spaces for community bonding and recreation. Through the seamless collaboration between the four agencies, the pond area will be aesthetically enhanced with ample space for users to rest, exercise and engage in social interaction. Users will be able to move easily between Yishun Pond and Yishun Park for recreation and community activities. Residents in the vicinity will have a more pleasant walk to Yishun MRT station and the bus interchange via the path that runs along KTPH's perimeter, while hospital patients can move out of the wards to an extended garden environment to enjoy the healing benefits of greenery.

A hospital in a garden, a garden in a hospital

4 A barrier-free lakeside promenade will be built to connect the hospital's central courtyard to the garden, an upgraded footpath for walking and jogging, and fitness corners. Benches for rest and reflection will be placed around the garden while social spaces have been planned to promote inter-generational activities and encourage interaction. These features will complement KTPH's existing green features which includes an urban farming initiative, lush gardens populated with birds, butterflies and indigenous fish, and greenery located throughout the hospital for patients' benefit.

5 “At KTPH, we strongly believe that greenery is essential in promoting health and healing, so it was natural for us to adopt the pond in 2005 under PUB's Our Waters Programme, and participate actively in plans to transform it into a green lung. The redevelopment of the area will make it a natural extension of the hospital, and provide more opportunities for us to spread our health promoting messages among patients and Yishun residents,” said Mr Liak Teng Lit, Chief Executive Officer, Alexandra Health.

Planting to revitalise Yishun Pond

6 Yishun Pond itself will undergo a makeover. Marshlands will be created along the pond's shore to soften the water edge and improve water quality by filtering pollutants through the use of aquatic plants. . In addition, the marshlands will attract wildlife, enhancing the biodiversity of the area.

7 Mr Tan Nguan Sen, PUB's Director of Catchment and Waterways, said, “We are happy to work with the various agencies on this project as part of rejuvenating Yishun town. Yishun Pond is an important part of our water supply system, collecting rainwater which is then pumped to Lower Seletar Reservoir. Under the ABC Waters Programme, we hope to transform the pond beyond its functional purposes of water collection and storage into a venue for the community to enjoy. At the same time, we hope that while enjoying themselves at the pond, people will cherish and appreciate water, and play a part in helping to keep our waters clean.”

Seamless connectivity for Yishun residents

8 As part of HDB's plans to improve pedestrian accessibility for Yishun residents and the general public, a 84-metre overhead bridge will connect Yishun Pond to Yishun Park, which is located across the road from the pond. The highlight of the connector is a three-storey lookout tower with a unique design resembling a butterfly in flight. The lookout tower will offer visitors a panoramic view of the pond via a 94-metre scenic walk on a barrier free ramp.

9 “The proposals to rejuvenate the Yishun Pond were well-received by our residents during the ROH exhibition in 2009. This project provides a brand new garden which connects to upcoming parks and park connectors, expanding the recreational facilities in Yishun. Residents can also enjoy a

panaromic view from the new lookout tower, which I am sure will be an iconic landmark of Yishun Town. I hope our residents will be excited about this project as they have much to look forward to as the overall ROH plans are realised progressively,” said Mrs Cheong Koon Hean, Chief Executive Officer, HDB.

A lush multi-dimensional garden

10 To provide unique garden experiences for park users, NParks will plant a flower trail along the east perimeter of Yishun Pond. The trail will feature indigenous flowering species, creating visual interest for both visitors as well as those traveling along Yishun Central. NParks is also planning a native forested area which will feature indigenous species of shade and canopy trees in the north-east corner of the pond development. The forest will have a natural dry stream bed with natural boulders, river stones, and water edge planting to provide drainage for the area while adding to the natural ambience.

11 Mr Nigel Goh, Director of Parks, NParks, said, “We are proud to be part of this meaningful inter-agency project to create new spaces for healing, community and recreation for patients, residents of Yishun as well as park visitors to enjoy. Yishun Pond, together with the nearby Yishun Park, will also help to cultivate a greater sense of ownership in our City in a Garden.”

12 The groundbreaking ceremony to mark the start of development work was graced by Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman, Parliamentary Secretary for National Development and Member of Parliament for Sembawang GRC, as well as representatives and guests from the four collaborating agencies.