



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gawad Kalinga forms Singapore arm to share and develop community-building approach towards eradicating poverty in Asia's poverty stricken areas

GK Hope Initiative (GKHi) in Singapore will also connect industry partners and their expertise with the communities served by Gawad Kalinga across the Asia Pacific region

Singapore, 10 September 2009 – Gawad Kalinga (GK), a movement in the Philippines that has transformed thousands of slums into vibrant communities by eradicating poverty and restoring human dignity, has formed a regional arm in Singapore called GK Hope Initiative (GKHi).

GKHi was incorporated in February 2009 in Singapore, and in July 2009 was registered as an international charity organization to effectively serve humanitarian and social needs in Asia.

Specifically, GKHi's mission will be to contribute to a poverty-free world by sharing the value of GK's strategy of providing land for the landless, homes for the homeless, and food for the hungry, to poverty-stricken areas across the Asia Pacific region. The vision of GKHi is a world of poverty-free, sustainable communities where people live with dignity and in harmony.

Mr Tony Meloto, founder of GK, said that being based in Singapore is very strategic to the vision for sharing the value of GK globally. "What we have pioneered in GK in the Philippines is not just the model but the spirit by which communities may break out of poverty. We call this the GK Way. A key success factor has been our ability to harness partnerships and create innovative collaboration with individuals, academia, government agencies and corporations. Given Singapore's excellent location and infrastructure, we want to be here so that GKHi may leverage on its base here to further create synergies for resources, funding, skills, technology transfer, conferencing and strategy for the region."

GKHi will seek partnership across sectors and borders with the objective of creating best-practice, viable poverty eradication approaches in the fields of Education, Health, Community Infrastructure Development, Environment, Community Empowerment, Productivity and Food Sufficiency. These pillars are viewed as critical for ensuring the lasting transformation of slums and a poverty-free world for future generations.

Having witnessed the work of GK in the Philippines first hand, Ms Ong Ai Lin, Chairperson of GKHi, is excited by the potential to enhance and expand the GK model across the Asia Pacific region. She said, "We at GKHi have been tasked to take the GK model and the GK Way global to all poor communities, starting with those in Asia. We will do so by being respectful of all ethnicities and religious beliefs, and by sharing the successful methodology GK has mastered

over a decade of transforming slums into beautiful, sustainable, peaceful and caring communities, positioned to contribute to the economic and political well-being of the region.”

In five years' time by 2014, GKHi aims to have as many as 200 GK villages in 8 countries outside of the Philippines. The first partner village is being planned for Goa, India in 2010, with the Tripura Foundation, a non-profit corporation committed to abolishing extreme poverty formed since 1989.

Over the next 12 months, the immediate priorities for GKHi will be establishing partnerships, developing research and implementation initiatives across the region, fund-raising and building up the operational effectiveness of the organization. To help achieve some of these objectives, GKHi will be holding a number of events in Singapore in the coming months. They include:

- A fund-raising dinner in November 2009 to garner financial support for the work of GKHi;
- Green Kalinga Environmental Symposium in December 2009 to highlight environmental issues in development and showcase successful environmentally sustainable approaches; and
- GK Global Summit co-hosted by the National University of Singapore and Ngee Ann Polytechnic in June 2010 expected to attract some 2000 participants from around the world.

Said Ms Ong, “We have a very busy year ahead of us. Challenging though the tasks may be, we have been energized by the tremendous amount of support and goodwill we have received from everyone we have come across and that have heard about us. We are very grateful for everyone’s contribution. It shows that Singaporeans really care and reinforces our decision to be here.”

Please refer to the following attachments for more information:

- 1. Factsheet on Gawad Kalinga**
- 2. Factsheet on GK Hi**
- 3. Bio on Tony Meloto**

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