



## **JOINT NEWS RELEASE**

### **SINGAPORE PARTNERS COLLABORATE WITH BHUTAN TO SHARE EDUCATION EXPERTISE**

Singapore, 15 April 2009 – Temasek Foundation will partner Singapore Cooperation Enterprise and the Singapore International Foundation on programmes to share expertise and best practices in education and in the integration of information technology (IT) in teaching in the Kingdom of Bhutan. A SGD \$937,000 grant from Temasek Foundation will support two programmes: 1) a capacity-building programme in school education leadership and curriculum development through the set-up of two model Beacon Schools, and 2) the development of pedagogy and curriculum to weave IT into teaching in schools.

#### ***The establishment of Beacon Schools in Bhutan***

Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) will partner Temasek Foundation (TF) and the Royal Education Council (REC) to establish Beacon Schools in Bhutan by 2010. These schools will serve as model schools of innovation and excellence for existing state-funded schools in Bhutan. This programme is supported by Temasek Foundation with a grant amount of SGD \$700,000.

The two-year programme aims to support the Kingdom of Bhutan's education reform efforts by partnering REC to share Singapore's best practices in policy planning and governance of schools; education leadership development; teacher training; and curriculum development. SCE will put together a team of consultants comprising former education officers, principals and teachers from the Singapore Ministry of Education and Educare (a cooperative of the Teachers' Union).

The Beacon Schools, when ready, will implement new curriculum in mathematics and science; and reformed governance with greater school autonomy. About 84 education policymakers, school leaders and master teachers will be trained.

“SCE is pleased to partner REC and TF in sharing Singapore’s expertise in the field of education with Bhutan. We have been deeply impressed by the Bhutanese determination to adapt best practices from around the world for education reform and we are honoured that in this case, Bhutan is keen on adapting the Singapore model. SCE also hopes that through this partnership, both Bhutan and Singapore will get to know each other better.” Mr. Alphonsus Chia, Chief Executive Officer of SCE said at the signing ceremony.

### ***SIF wires up Bhutanese classrooms***

The second programme, Bhutan W.I.R.ED (Weaving Infotech Resources in Education), a three-year project to help Bhutan’s education system employ IT for learning and teaching, was also launched today by the Singapore International Foundation (SIF). The project is a collaboration with the Bhutan Ministry of Education and Royal University of Bhutan, and is supported by a grant of SGD \$237,000 from Temasek Foundation.

Through Bhutan W.I.R.ED, the use of IT will be integrated into the curricula at the Paro College of Education, Samtse College of Education and five-pilot project schools in Bhutan. Forty lecturers at the two teacher-training colleges and 25 teachers at the pilot-project schools will learn to develop and use IT-based lessons.

Singapore volunteers skilled in IT-curriculum implementation will live and work at the pilot project schools, while selected Bhutanese teachers and lecturers will be invited to Singapore on study visits. A model IT classroom will also be set up at a pilot-project school, where the trained teachers can transfer what they learn to their colleagues.

Ms. Jean Tan, Executive Director, SIF, said, “The SIF has been in Bhutan for the past eight years, working alongside our partners in the Royal Government of Bhutan. Our volunteers have helped to grow the IT-in-education capabilities of Bhutan through activities like developing IT courses endorsed by the Bhutan Ministry of Education, setting up a local area network for the Royal University of Bhutan, and assisting IT lecturers to develop and teach a new IT-based curriculum.

“Bhutan W.I.R.ED represents the SIF’s continuing efforts to enable communities to achieve self-sufficiency through capacity-building projects, as well as nurture active global citizens through volunteerism.”

### ***Building friendships and human social development***

A signing ceremony was held in Bhutan today to formalise the partnerships for the two programmes. Witnessing the signing ceremony in Bhutan, Mr. Goh Geok Khim, Chairman of Temasek Foundation said, "Developing communities in Asia through capacity building programmes is a core focus area of Temasek Foundation's mandate. We believe these two programmes in education and IT will be helpful to support Bhutan's progress and development, and more importantly, the partnerships will also encourage greater knowledge exchange and enhance friendships between Singapore and Bhutan."

The Beacon Schools and Bhutan W.I.R.ED programmes will be implemented concurrently from 2009 to 2011.

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Enclosed:

1. Annex 1 - Factsheet on the establishment of Beacon Schools in Bhutan
2. Annex 2 - Factsheet on the Singapore International Foundation in Bhutan and Bhutan W.I.R.ED

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*Jointly issued by Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, Singapore International Foundation and Temasek Foundation*