

*Media Release*

*For Immediate Release*

### **UWS and NIE/NTU Jointly Mark the Year of the Turtle**

*Singapore, 31 July 2006* – The educational journey of marine conservation continues as Underwater World Singapore (UWS) and National Institute of Education (NIE), an institute of Nanyang Technological University (NTU), came together today in a joint effort to commemorate the Indian Ocean - South East Asia (IOSEA) "Year of the Turtle" (YoT). In what would be an unusual voyage, 11 turtles fitted with satellite-tracking devices will be released into international waters for the first time. The occasion was graced by the Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan.

In contrast to previous turtle releases on-shore, the 11 turtles were today transported by a Pacific International Lines container vessel, the Kota Hadiah, for release, on 1 Aug 06, in the South China Sea by NIE's professor, Dr C H Diong, the Project's Principal Investigator. The scientific basis for the release at sea and the safety of the experimental turtles were important considerations in this NIE/NTU research study.

The momentous occasion was marked by the unveiling of the "Sea Turtle Conservation Gallery" by Mr Mah at UWS. The Gallery features a plethora of information and displays on the following:

- the significance of IOSEA and the Singapore YoT committee,
- the natural history and characteristics of each of the 7 species of sea turtles
- illustrations of sea turtle life-cycle and anatomy
- a 3D model of a turtle nest
- threats and conservation issues
- turtle conservation efforts in Singapore
- what Singaporeans could do to protect these marine creatures

As part of its ongoing initiative to educate the public on turtle conservation, UWS' Education and Curatorial departments will be conducting a series of educational and outreach programmes over the next few months. These include public seminars at the National Library Board, training workshops for YoT Ambassadors as well as Turtle Conservation Talks for school groups visiting UWS.

Mr Kwek Meng Tiam, General Manager of Underwater World Singapore commenting on this latest exhibit, "At Underwater World, we are constantly looking at creative ways to educate visitors, especially children, on the importance of conservation and marine protection. And this being the Year of the Turtle, we hope to bring to the attention of our visitors the distinct characteristics of these creatures, the dangers they are facing and the need to protect them."

### **About Underwater World Singapore**

Underwater World Singapore is a wholly owned subsidiary of Haw Par Corporation Limited. Situated on Sentosa Island, this leisure and educational attraction showcases the rich variety of marine life to be found around the region, with educational and recreational activities available here.

The Dolphin Lagoon, an attraction of Underwater World Singapore houses the Indo-Pacific Humpbacked Dolphins, commonly known as pink dolphins for its coat of "bubbly" pink in contrast to the usual grey appearance of dolphins. At the "Meet-the-Dolphin" sessions, visitors can enjoy a close encounter with these adorable pink creatures.

At Underwater World Singapore, our mission goes beyond making our guests aware of the fascinating marine life. Our commitment to marine conservation and environmental awareness is demonstrated through our work in public education, breeding, rescue and rehabilitation, and research. Underwater World Singapore reinforces its environmental efforts through educational exhibits and a variety of education programmes to children and other guests. School visits are actively supported, and a number of new educational programmes are planned. Underwater World Singapore has also been very active in providing special programmes and assistance to the physically and mentally disabled.

For more information, please visit [www.underwaterworld.com.sg](http://www.underwaterworld.com.sg)

### **About the National Institute of Education**

The National Institute of Education (NIE) is an institute of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore.

NIE provides all levels of teacher education, ranging from initial teacher education programmes to further teacher preparation for serving teachers, departmental heads, vice-principals and principals. It also offers postgraduate programmes which lead to the award of higher degrees in Arts, Education, Physical Education and Science. Other specialised programmes which train pre-school and kindergarten teachers, teachers of special schools and staff of institutes of higher learning are also conducted by NIE.

As the national teacher education institute in Singapore, NIE is critical in transforming the teacher preparation system to meet changing needs of the education system. It also plays an important role in providing educational research and consultancy services to the Ministry of Education and schools. In line with the mission of the Ministry, which is to mould the future of our nation, NIE's vision is to be "An Institute of Distinction".

For more information, please visit [www.nie.edu.sg](http://www.nie.edu.sg)

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