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**Press Release**

**WATER ON THEIR MINDS**

***Students to vie for chance to represent Singapore in international competition***

*Singapore, 9 June 2008* – What have ginger and Chinese tea leaves got to do with water treatment? These are among the interesting projects in the inaugural Singapore Junior Water Prize (SJWP) competition held to pick Singapore's representative team to the Stockholm Junior Water Prize competition in Sweden.

The finals on 9 June will take place at Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), which is organising the competition together with the Lien Foundation (LF). The event is supported by PUB, the national water agency.

The competition is open to students aged between 15 and 20, and the shortlisted projects will be displayed during the Singapore International Water Week where more than 6,000 water professionals and government officials are expected to congregate to address water issues and solutions. The top three finalists will also present their projects to an international audience at the Singapore International Water Week on 25 June at Suntec Singapore.

The competition has attracted 56 teams from 24 educational institutions comprising secondary schools, junior colleges and polytechnics. On average, there are 3 students per team.

Mr Chia Mia Chiang, the Principal of Ngee Ann Polytechnic, said NP is excited to play a key role in sending the very first Singapore team to the international competition in Sweden.

"Just imagine, someday, there will be a group of young Singaporeans winning the Stockholm Junior Water Prize, much like winning a junior Nobel Prize for water. This is not a pipe dream. I am sure the team representing Singapore will put up a credible show in Sweden," said Mr Chia.

The six projects which will be presented at the finals are as follows:

- Use of ginger oils to treat Escherichia Coli in water (National Junior College);
- Development of a diagnostic kit to detect disease-causing bacteria in sea bass (Ngee Ann Polytechnic);
- Design of a cost-effective method for water desalination (NUS High School of Mathematics & Science);
- Use of freshwater fish as bioindicators of common pollutants in waterways (NUS High School of Mathematics & Science);
- Introduction of a low-cost system to monitor turbidity of water (Raffles Institution);
- Use of Chinese tea leaves to absorb cancer-causing ions in water (Yishun Junior College).

Said Mr Lee Poh Wah, the Programme Director of LF: “Water is a life sustaining and strategic resource. In countries with limited natural sources of water, like Singapore, there is a greater need to sensitize our youths to water issues, and to foster a stronger sense of responsibility towards water. Through this competition, we hope to cultivate an interest in water science among our young researchers, motivating them to take bold steps in coming up with innovative water solutions.”

Mr Khoo Teng Chye, the Chief Executive of PUB and Executive Director of the Environment & Water Industry Development Council, said: “With the international spotlight on the inaugural Singapore International Water Week, it is heartening that the competition has attracted very good water-related projects from young Singaporeans. As Singapore develops to become a global hydrohub, it is important to nurture the young people and create a conducive environment that encourages R&D and a career in water. We hope that the opportunity for them to participate in the Singapore International Water Week and the World Water Week in Stockholm will give them wider global exposure and mould them into future water technopreneurs.”

The winners will receive their prizes from the Guest of Honour, Dr Amy Khor, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, and Mayor of the Southwest District.

### **Singapore Junior Water Prize**

The Singapore Junior Water Prize competition is aimed at encouraging youths to develop an interest in issues concerning water and the environment.

Participants are challenged to come up with innovative solutions in water-related projects which may focus on local, regional, national or global topics and should be research-oriented. Judging will be based on various criteria such as creativity, methodology and practical skills.

The event will not only cement Singapore’s position as a water hub, but also heighten youths’ interest in issues concerning water and the environment, as well as science and technology.

The winning team will represent Singapore at the Stockholm Junior Water Prize competition, an annual international contest held every August in Stockholm, Sweden. The winning team will also receive S\$5,000 cash plus a fully-paid trip to Sweden for the international competition. Two other finalist teams will receive S\$1,000 each.

In October last year, the Lien Foundation and Ngee Ann were officially appointed by the Stockholm International Water Institute to be the national organiser to select a team to represent Singapore at the Stockholm Junior Water Prize competition. The Singapore Junior Water Prize is part of a joint initiative by the Lien Foundation and Ngee Ann to advance social and environmental causes, and cultivate regional goodwill by helping educational institutions in ASEAN. (For more background information, please see the **Appendix**.)

Ngee Ann is indeed well-placed to organise the competition with the Lien Foundation, given the polytechnic’s expertise and facilities in environmental and water technology. Ngee Ann also boasts a \$7.6 million Centre of Innovation for Environmental and Water Technology to help local companies, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs) develop new and innovative products, services and processes.

The Centre of Innovation for Environmental and Water Technology, which started operations in March 2007, functions as a dedicated technology centre to help local companies boost their competitive edge in both the local and global markets. To date, this Centre of Innovation has undertaken more than 35 projects. Twenty additional projects are also in the pipeline. The centre is in discussion with industry partners on projects to focus on low energy wastewater treatment systems, solar technology and waste resource recovery such as those in the building industry.

### **Singapore International Water Week**

The Singapore International Water Week is the global platform for water solutions. It will bring policymakers, industry leaders, experts and practitioners together to address challenges, showcase technologies, discover opportunities and celebrate achievements in the water world. More than 6,000 government officials and water professionals are expected to attend the event.

Comprising the Water Leaders Summit, Water Convention, Water Expo and Water festival, it culminates in the presentation of the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize, a prestigious international award to recognise outstanding contributions in solving global water issues. The inaugural event will be held from 23 to 27 June 2008 at the Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre. The theme is Sustainable Water Solutions for Cities which focuses on the best practices, successful case studies and the practical delivery of water solutions and technologies. For more information, please visit [www.siww.com.sg](http://www.siww.com.sg)

### **Notes to Editors:**

#### **About Ngee Ann Polytechnic**

Ngee Ann Polytechnic is one of Singapore's leading institutions of higher learning. The polytechnic offers both business-related and technology-based diploma and advanced diploma programmes. The polytechnic aims to provide relevant, balanced and value-added curricula by creating an effective teaching and learning environment. A key thrust for the polytechnic is forging partnerships with industry and other institutions in order to keep students close to current industry and market practices. For more information, please visit [www.np.edu.sg](http://www.np.edu.sg)

#### **About Lien Foundation**

The Lien Foundation was founded by Dr. Lien Ying Chow, an eminent Asian business leader, banker and hotelier. The Foundation pioneers new ground in philanthropy by investing in innovative solutions, convening strategic partnerships and catalyzing action on social and environmental challenges. The Foundation seeks to enhance educational opportunities for the disadvantaged and the development of nascent fields of studies; excellence in eldercare; and environmental sustainability in water and sanitation. For more information, please visit [www.lienfoundation.org](http://www.lienfoundation.org)

#### **About PUB**

PUB is a statutory board under the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources. It is the national water agency managing Singapore's water supply, water catchment and used water in an integrated way. PUB won the 2007 Stockholm Industry Water Award and was named Water Agency of the Year at the Global Water Awards 2006.

**About PUB's tagline: Water for All: Conserve, Value, Enjoy**

PUB has ensured a diversified and sustainable supply of water for Singapore with the Four National Taps (local catchment water, imported water, NEWater, desalinated water).

To provide water for all, PUB calls on all Singaporeans to play our part to conserve water, keep our water catchments and waterways clean and build a relationship with water so we can enjoy our water resources. We can then have enough water for all uses – for industry, for living, for life.

**For media queries, please contact:**

Ms Sadiah Ahmad @ 6460 6232/8282 2515  
Ms May Goh @ 6460 8907/ 9680 7311  
Corporate Communications Office  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Mr Lee Poh Wah @ 65356217  
Lien Foundation

Ms Lim Hui Ling @ 6731 3293  
Ms Joy Tan @ 6731 3109  
Communications  
PUB, the national water agency

## SEED Capital programme

The Singapore Junior Water Prize (SJWP) is part of a joint initiative by the Lien Foundation (LF) and Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) to advance social and environmental causes, and cultivate regional goodwill by helping educational institutions in ASEAN.

Under the LF-NP **Social, Environmental & Educational Development (SEED) Capital programme**, the partners aim to fuel growth and development along these three fronts. This \$1.8 million, three-year collaboration involves the following initiatives:

- **Environmental Development:** Organising the annual SJWP to select a Team Singapore to vie for the Stockholm Junior Water Prize in Sweden. This will plant the seeds of innovation and heighten young Singaporeans' interest in issues concerning water and the environment;
- **Educational Development:** Providing expert advice to educational institutions in ASEAN countries. This will plant the seeds of regional goodwill and help such institutions enhance the quality of their courses, thus enabling them to play a more effective role in uplifting their communities. Ngee Ann has already provided curriculum advice in accountancy and pedagogic training to Sekayu Polytechnic in Musi Banyuasin (MUBA), a rural district in South Sumatra;
- **Social Development:** Undertaking media-related projects to raise public awareness and encourage Singaporeans to support social causes such as hospice and palliative care, dementia, as well as water and sanitation. This will plant the seeds of change for social development. Students from Ngee Ann's School of Film & Media Studies have already produced radio programmes and written articles on terminal illnesses which will be used by the Lien Foundation in a death and hospice campaign that it is spearheading.