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MEDIA RELEASE

TWO DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUALS RECOGNISED AT SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA CONVENTION 2019 FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Singaporean J Y Pillay receives Special Lifetime Achievement Award at ISAS Gala Dinner

Singapore, 15 November 2019 – One founded a non-government organisation (NGO) which is one of the world's largest today, empowering communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease, healthcare and social injustice, while the other contributed immensely to the socio-economic development of Singapore through a distinguished career in the Singapore public service.

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed from Bangladesh and Mr J Y Pillay from Singapore were recognised for their contributions to society and public service at a gala dinner organised by the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) at the National University of Singapore (NUS) on 15 November 2019 to mark the start of the fourth South Asian Diaspora Convention.

Sir Fazle was presented with the Outstanding Member of the South Asian Diaspora (OMSAD) Award. Founder and Chair Emeritus of BRAC, Sir Fazle transformed a once tiny NGO into an internationally-recognised institution, which today has about 100,000 full time staff, operating across 11 countries in Asia and Africa. It has advanced credit to almost eight million people, schooled over a million children, and helped mainstream gender all over the developing world. The Geneva-based 'NGO Advisor' has ranked BRAC at the top of the list of 500 civil society organisations around the globe in terms of impact, innovation and sustainability. Recipient of numerous national and international awards for his contributions in social development, Sir Fazle was named Fortune Magazine's List of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders in 2014 and 2017.

"Sir Fazle has been instrumental in changing the lives of many as he spearheaded BRAC, the top global NGO of 2019," commented Ambassador Gopinath Pillai, ISAS' Chairman and Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore. "His contributions to social development and his life mission to help the poor serves as an inspiration for the South Asian diaspora and the society-at-large."

Past recipients of the OMSAD award are Mr Murli Kewalram Chanrai of the Kewalram Group in 2013 and the late Mr S R Nathan, former President of Singapore in 2016.

Mr Pillay received the Special Lifetime Achievement Award which was introduced for the first time at the SADC. A highly distinguished veteran civil servant, Mr Pillay was instrumental in shaping Singapore's economy after its separation from Malaysia in 1965. He is well noted for his contributions in building Singapore Airlines into a world-class carrier. He has also held leadership roles in the Singapore Exchange, DBS Bank, Government of Singapore Investment Corporation and the Monetary Authority of Singapore.

Singapore's Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, presented the two awards at the event which was attended by more than 600 guests from Singapore and abroad.

The gala dinner will be followed by the convention on Saturday, 16 November at the University Cultural Centre at NUS. Singapore's Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security, Mr Teo Chee Hean, will deliver the keynote address at the inaugural session and will participate in an interactive session with the audience thereafter.

Themed **Vibrant South Asia - Innovative Diaspora**, SADC 2019 explores how innovation drives key developments in South Asia through these six sub-themes – Business in South Asia: Opportunities and Challenges; Infrastructure and Smart Cities; Innovation, Start-ups and Youth; Women Empowerment in South Asia; South Asian Diaspora: A Strategic Asset?; and Technology in Financial Services

The full-day convention will feature close to 30 distinguished local and international speakers. Together, they will delve in great depth on several issues of great contemporary relevance for South Asia in particular, and the world in general.

Mr Lawrence Wong, Singapore's Minister for National Development and Second Minister for Finance, will also deliver a keynote address and participate in an interactive session on 'Infrastructure and Smart Cities'.

At the same time, Ms Indranee Rajah, Minister, Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Finance and Education, Singapore, will join us for the session on 'Women Empowerment in South Asia'. It is the first time this topic is included in the SADC, signifying its growing importance in the light of the changing position and rising consciousness among women in South Asia.

The session on Innovation, Start-ups and Youth, in particular, will pave the way for lively discussions on youth entrepreneurship. South Asia is a region of a young population and this demographic trend has encouraged the development of many innovative start-ups.

For the first time, an exciting cricket match with corporate teams and top-notch South Asian cricket celebrities will take place on Sunday, 17 November 2019 at the Singapore Indian Association cricket ground. It will feature players such as Mohammad Azharuddin, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan and Irfan Pathan (India); T M Dilshan (Sri Lanka); and Mohammad Ashraful and Abdur Razzak (Bangladesh).

On the evening of 17 November 2019, an In-conversation session with Indian cricket legends, moderated by Boria Majumdar, will conclude SADC 2019. This will be a rare chance to meet Indian cricketers who will share about their illustrious career and more.

The SADC has established itself as a platform for thought leaders to come together to address complex issues and explore pathways for transformations. The diaspora plays a significant role in the transformation of South Asia and SADC serves as a platform for the South Asian diaspora community to exchange meaningful conversations among policymakers, academics, civil society leaders and business leaders.

For the latest information on the event, please visit www.southasiandiaspora.org.

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About ISAS

The Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) was established in July 2004 as an autonomous research institute at the National University of Singapore (NUS). The establishment of ISAS reflects the increasing economic and political importance of South Asia, and the strong historical links between South Asia and Southeast Asia.

ISAS is dedicated to research on contemporary South Asia. The Institute seeks to promote understanding of this vital region of the world, and to communicate knowledge and insights about it to policy makers, the business community, academia and civil society, in Singapore and beyond.

For more information, visit <http://www.isas.nus.edu.sg>

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