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(9)

**STPB APPOINTS FIRST
HONORARY TOURISM CONSUL**

The Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB) has appointed its first Honorary Tourism Consul: Mr Masaru Yanagisawa of the city of Hakodate on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido.

Mr Edmund Cheng Wai Wing, Chairman STPB, officially appointed Mr Yanagisawa at a ceremony in Hakodate today (5 November).

Mr Yanagisawa, 51, is Chairman of the Hakodate-Singapore Society (HSS), which he founded in 1992. He is also Deputy Chairman of the Hakodate Tourist Association (HTA) and Chairman, President or Director of several major businesses and societies in the Japanese city.

As Honorary Tourism Consul, Mr Yanagisawa will assist the STPB in promoting Singapore in northern Japan.

"Mr Yanagisawa has been appointed our first Honorary Tourism Consul because of his commitment to enhancing relations between Singapore and Hakodate," said Mr Cheng. "His efforts have provided considerable opportunities for the STPB to promote tourism to Singapore from Hakodate."

Mr Yanagisawa said his interest in Singapore stemmed from the fact that he founded his company, Uocho Shokuhin Co Ltd, in 1965, the same year that Singapore became an independent nation.

"Singapore is a very special country to me because both of us have been developing along the same path, at the same time," said Mr Yanagisawa.

"Although Singapore is only twice as large as Hakodate City, it has achieved rapid economic growth in a short period and has established itself as one of the world's major tourist destinations," he added. "As a member of the tourism industry, I have a great interest in Singapore and have visited the country several times for both sightseeing and site inspections."

Links between Singapore and the city of Hakodate date back to 1989, when a replica statue of Singapore's Merlion was unveiled at Spa Beach, Nanaehama Hakodate. Mr Yanagisawa was responsible for building the Merlion replica, which he described as "a long-cherished dream".

In August 1992, the STPB and the HTA signed a Certificate of Affiliation to encourage the two-way flow of tourists between the two cities. In the same month, Singapore's Miss Tourism and a team of dragon dancers took part in the Ichiman-nin Odori Parade, Hakodate City's biggest annual festival.

In March this year, Singapore welcomed a 40-strong delegation from the HTA and the HSS, led by Mr Yanagisawa, who was also one of the VIP guests who attended the celebrations of the Merlion's 21st Anniversary in Singapore on 15 September 93.

In conjunction with the visit of the STPB delegation to Hakodate, a Singapore Food Festival is being held at the Hakodate Royal Hotel from 5 to 11 November 93.

The STPB has regional offices in Tokyo and Osaka.

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