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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Distinguished scholars invited to speak at
professional forum on
Access, Ageing and Disability**

**Jointly organised by Ministry of Community Development, Youth and
Sports (MCYS) and Tsao Foundation**

Venue: Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre
Level 2 (Rooms 208 and 209)
Suntec City Mall
Temasek Boulevard

How ***barrier-free*** is Singapore **for older people and those with disabilities** compared to other countries?

What ***more needs to be done to*** the **physical environment and infrastructure** to improve access for the disabled and elderly in Singapore?

How ***adequate*** is the **current legislation** on barrier free accessibility in building design for the elderly and physically handicapped in Singapore?

These issues of access for older people and people with disabilities will be discussed at a professional forum on “Access, Ageing and Disability – Issues and Possibilities” on Tuesday 13 September.

Three distinguished scholars who are internationally recognised in their respective fields of ageing and disability research studies, disability and elderly-friendly architectural design, and policy development of accessibility guidelines, have been invited to speak on access for the disabled and elderly - from the perspective of their own scholarly research and experience. The forum is

organised by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) and the Tsao Foundation under the MCYS-TSAO Foundation Experts' Series on Successful Ageing 2005.

Profiles of invited speakers:

Professor Lois M. Verbrugge is Research Professor Emerita and Senior Distinguished Research Scientist Emerita from the Institute of Gerontology at the University of Michigan. Professor Verbrugge's landmark paper on "The Disablement Process", which she co-authored and published in the prestigious "Social Science and Medicine" journal in 1990, provoked keen scholarly interest and research on disability studies. It is one of the 10 most-cited papers in the field of social sciences over the past decade.

She will be speaking on disability and ageing: the impact of ageing disability on people's lives, and the relationship between environment/assistive devices, physical impairment and functional disability.

Mr. David Capozzi is Director of Technical and Information Services for the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board). The Access Board is the only US federal agency devoted to promoting accessibility for people with disabilities. The Board develops design criteria for the built environment, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, as well as for electronic and information technology. Mr Capozzi is responsible for developing accessibility guidelines for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Architectural Barriers Act and Telecommunications Act.

He will be speaking on the US approach to disability and access; by drawing on his unique experience as a government official developing accessibility guidelines for public and industry compliance - as well as – as a former advocate promoting the legal rights of people with disabilities when he was National Advocacy Director for Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA).

Dr James Harrison is a Qualified UK Architect, having practiced, researched or taught architectural design in Britain, Central Africa and Southeast Asia. He is currently lecturing at the Queen's University of Belfast after four years of Associate Professorship teaching studio design and lecturing both Bachelors and Masters' courses at the School of Architecture, National University of Singapore. Dr Harrison is also a resource person for the Asian Pacific Centre on Disability, Bangkok, UN ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific), UN ESCWA (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia) .

Dr Harrison who has done extensive research on accessible design and environments for the disabled and elderly will be addressing the issue of physical access in the context of Singapore.

The forum will be open to eldercare and disability VWOs, building developers, architects, researchers as well as government agencies such as those in aged care and elderly services, transportation, housing, building control, urban planning and national parks.

For media enquiries and interviews, please contact

Ho Yuen Kwan

Tel: 6433 2744

Email: yuenkwan@tsaofoundation.org

Cathryn Tan

Tel: 6433 2743

Email: cathryn@tsaofoundation.org