

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL TABLE TENNIS FEDERATION AND SPORT SINGAPORE OPEN TALKS FOR WORLD'S FIRST 'HOME OF TABLE TENNIS'



*(L-R) Zeng Jian, Team Singapore Athlete, Toh Boon Yi, DCE, SportSG, Alan Goh, CEO (Designate), SportSG, Kon Yin Tong, Chairman, SportSG, Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, Petra Sorling, President, ITTF, Steve Dainton, Group CEO, ITTF, Poh Li San, President, STTA, Koen Pang, Team Singapore Athlete
[Photo credits: International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)]*

SINGAPORE, 19 March 2023 – The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) and Sport Singapore (SportSG) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to kickstart discussions for the world's first 'Home of Table Tennis' (HoTT). The signing ceremony took place on the final evening of the Singapore Smash 2023 and attests to both parties' commitment towards raising the profile of table tennis regionally and reinforcing the strong partnership between SportSG and the ITTF.

To expand its global footprint, the ITTF plans to establish several new hubs around the world and Singapore has been identified as a potential location for the first such hub. Key reasons for this are:

- Singapore's commitment to table tennis with the hosting of several marquee WTT events such as the Singapore Smash, and our TeamSG athletes representing Singapore at the international arena through major games such as SEA Games and Commonwealth Games.
- The nation's strong reputation for hosting world-class sports, such as marquee events like the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon and HSBC Singapore Rugby 7s feature regularly on the calendar.

- The strong suite of world-class infrastructure such as the Singapore Sports Hub, and strong travel connectivity.
- Singapore's strategic location as a well-connected hub for organisations with an international footprint, evidenced from the regional headquarters of international companies.
- Consistently ranking as one of the best places to live and work, with a diverse culture, excellent healthcare and world-class educational systems, which will help attract and retain top talent.

“Sport Singapore and the International Table Tennis Federation have been working together to achieve our common goal of raising the profile of table tennis in Singapore. Through our collaboration, we organised the WTT Cup Finals in December 2021 and the Singapore Smash in March 2022 as well as March 2023. It is therefore very apt that on the final day of Singapore Smash 2023, we bring our partnership to the next level with the Singapore HoTT project. Through this, SportSG will work with the ITTF to chart new paths and create more opportunities to benefit our local athletes, coaches, industry partners and others in our table tennis fraternity,” said Mr Alan Goh, CEO (Designate), SportSG.

Commenting on the partnership, ITTF President, Ms Petra Sörling said, “This project is a significant milestone for table tennis and a clear signal of our commitment to the sport's continued growth and development around the world. As we strive to bring table tennis to new corners of the globe and inspire the next generation of players and fans, Singapore serves as a shining example of what is possible. By partnering with SportSG to consider establishing a hub in Singapore, we are laying the foundation for a more innovative, inclusive, and sustainable future for our sport. We are excited to continue working closely with SportSG to bring this vision to life and create more opportunities for table tennis players and fans worldwide.”

Mr Steve Dainton, ITTF Group Chief Executive Officer, added, “We are thrilled to partner with Sport Singapore on this project, the place I have called home for the last twelve years. This initiative is certainly a step forward in our efforts to grow and develop the sport of table tennis in Singapore and around the world as we hope to inspire the next generation of table tennis players and fans. Since the opening of ITTF's Asia-Pacific office in Singapore in 2011, we have seen table tennis grow by leaps and bounds in Singapore. We look forward to having more of such hubs around the world.”

Exploring a HoTT in Singapore

Envisioned as an international centre of excellence, a HoTT in Singapore would focus its efforts to raise the profile of table tennis within the Singapore community. A Singapore HoTT would create avenues for athletes and coaches to strengthen capabilities through ITTF's world-class knowledge and networks. In addition, riding on Singapore's technological capabilities and talent, the HoTT can be a testbed for innovative creations and digital solutions for table tennis and contribute to the uplifting of table tennis world-wide. The HoTT could also contribute to programmes and initiatives to further grow community participation and spectatorship in table tennis. The discussions with ITTF on the establishment of a Singapore HoTT will cover potential areas of collaboration which include:

1. Pathway Development

Discussions about the Singapore HoTT will include potential plans to establish a dedicated ITTF Academy to develop coaches' and officials' capabilities and better position them among the global ecosystem. In addition, the Academy will also be a conduit for locals to train and exchange knowledge alongside some of the best players in the world.

Ms Poh Li San, President of Singapore Table Tennis Association, said: “Having a table tennis Centre of Excellence in Singapore is exciting news for the fraternity. We foresee the HoTT will strengthen our Table Tennis and overall sporting ecosystem in Singapore. There will be new opportunities for our athletes and coaches to learn from the best. The availability of quality training and facilities will not only enhance existing pathway development plans but will also help to inspire a new generation of table tennis athletes.”

2. Industry Development

With the Singapore HoTT, there is potential to raise the profile of table tennis within the sporting industry through marquee events such as the Singapore Smash and other community activations. In addition to the diverse calendar of table tennis events, the Singapore HoTT would play a crucial role in reinforcing Singapore as the hub for knowledge transfer and showcase thought leadership in the sport, education, innovation, and technology. This could also further cultivate an ecosystem that is conducive for sustainable growth of table tennis and continued skills development.

3. Community Engagement & Inclusivity

Moving beyond high-performance sport and industry development, it is also crucial to grow the base of table tennis participants within the community. The Singapore HoTT will potentially create opportunities for community projects that encourage people of all abilities to come together through table tennis. Other ways of promoting inclusivity include leveraging ITTF Foundation and relevant ITTF Group entities on projects relating to accessibility, diplomacy, health, solidarity, sustainability, and other social and humanitarian causes.

4. Innovation & Technology

The Singapore HoTT project will also explore ways to use technological developments and innovation in promoting table tennis as a sport “for all, for life” including youths, older citizens and people of all abilities. Furthermore, with Singapore as a regional hub for the latest technology on the market, it could also serve as a resource hub and sandbox for innovative solutions in table tennis, including game formats, training formats, event implementations, fan experience, e-sports, sport science, equipment, apparel, and materials.

“Homes of Table Tennis” Concept

The ITTF is embarking on an exciting project to establish several new HoTTs and is currently seeking potential host cities to seize the opportunity of hosting one of the most exciting sport. Launched in 2019, the project was on a temporary hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2022, the ITTF has re-activated the project, fully reviewing the concept in light of the learnings of the pandemic, and decided to search not for one Home, but for multiple hubs each with a specialised expertise.

ITTF is committed to working closely with each city to ensure a mutually beneficial partnership that will promote sustainable development. The ITTF will prioritise a targeted approach throughout the selection process, seeking to engage with cities that have expressed interest in the initial project and demonstrated a strong commitment to table tennis. Moreover, all interested cities are welcome to open non-committal dialogue with the ITTF to explore the possibilities.

The ITTF will consider each application carefully and select the most suitable host city for each headquarters based on a range of factors, including infrastructure, accessibility, and local support for the sport of table tennis. Once selected, the ITTF will engage in targeted dialogue with each city to ensure the hubs are tailored to the local needs and priorities.

Hosting one of the new hubs provides a unique opportunity for cities to leverage the power of sports to promote economic growth, social progress, and international collaboration. Attracting numerous visitors, athletes, and officials from around the world, boosting local economies and creating new opportunities for business and investment, each city will gain access to a global network of stakeholders and build lasting connections that will benefit their communities for years to come.

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ABOUT SPORT SINGAPORE

As the national sports agency, Sport Singapore's core purpose is to inspire the Singapore spirit and transform Singapore through sport. Through innovative, fun and meaningful sporting experiences, our mission is to reach out and serve communities across Singapore with passion and pride. With Vision 2030 – Singapore's sports master plan, our mandate goes beyond winning medals. Sport Singapore uses sport to create greater sporting opportunities and access, more inclusivity and integration as well as broader development of capabilities. Sport Singapore works with a vast network of public-private-people sector partners for individuals to live better through sport.

To find out more, visit SportSG's websites at www.sportsingapore.gov.sg and <https://circle.myactivesg.com/>.

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About International Table Tennis Federation

The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) is the world governing body of table tennis, representing 227 Member Associations. Founded in 1926, the ITTF inspires sustainable growth for the sport through engagement, development, and passion.

For media queries, please contact:

Sport Singapore

Venetia Chung

Email: venetia_chung@sport.gov.sg

International Table Tennis Federation

Tristan Lavier

Email: media@ittf.com