



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED
AMENDMENTS TO THE HUMAN ORGAN TRANSPLANT ACT**

1 A public consultation exercise was conducted by the Ministry of Health (MOH) from 14 November to 15 December 2008 to seek the public's views and feedback on the following proposed amendments to the Human Organ Transplant Act (HOTA):

- (a) Should HOTA be amended to lift the upper age limit for presumed consent for cadaveric organ donation?
- (b) Should HOTA be amended to allow paired matching for exchange of organs between donor-recipient pairs?
- (c) Should HOTA be amended to provide reasonable compensation to support the welfare of living donors?
- (d) Should HOTA be amended to increase the penalties for organ trading syndicates and middlemen?

2 The public was invited to send their views via e-mails, post, faxes and online discussion/e-consultation managed by REACH and MOH. The consultation paper was also sent to 10 medical, professional, and other non-government organisations for comments. MOH had received 55 responses from the public and written feedback from 9 organisations. There was also a public dialogue session held on 2 December 2008 in collaboration with the People's Association and an opinion survey was conducted after the session. 162 participants from the dialogue session responded to the written survey.

3 The responses received from the public, medical, professional and non-government organisations showed that Singaporeans were supportive of the proposed amendments to HOTA. A summary of the views received is as follows:



- (a) More than 85 per cent of respondents were in support of:
- i) Lifting the upper age limit for cadaveric organ donation (93%)
 - ii) Allowing donor-recipient paired matching for exchanges of organs (96%)
 - iii) Increasing penalties for organ trading syndicates and middlemen (96%)
 - iv) Some form of payment to living organ donors (86%)
- (b) There were however some reservations on the use of the word “compensation” which could be misunderstood as payment for the organ and that it could amount to an inducement to people to donate an organ, and discourage altruistic organ donation. Many however agreed that reimbursing and defraying cost should be provided to living donors to cover direct expenses (e.g. transport and accommodation), indirect losses (e.g. loss of time and earnings) and future expenses (e.g. anticipated costs of medical follow-up).
- (c) For the written survey conducted during the dialogue session, 76 per cent of the survey respondents felt that a reasonable payment level should exceed \$50,000. It is also notable that 96 per cent of respondents were positive towards donating their own organs after death to help organ failure patients.

More details of the public feedback are available in the annex.

4 The Ministry is mindful of the sensitivities of payment for organ donation and reaffirms our commitment to prohibit organ trading in Singapore. That is why it is proposing to raise the penalty on middleman and syndicates involved in organ trading. The Ministry will follow international practices and guidelines in working out a legally and ethical scheme to cover the costs and expenses incurred by living donors so as to remove financial disincentives to organ donation. The Ministry will take into account the feedback that the word “compensation” is best avoided.



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5 MOH would like to thank all respondents for their feedback. MOH will carefully consider the feedback received from the public and various institutions in refining the HOTA Amendment Bill and will continue to educate the public on organ donation.

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