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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **SINGAPORE TABLE TENNIS ANNOUNCES COACHING CHANGES IN VIEW OF THE UPCOMING RIO OLYMPICS 2016**

The Singapore Table Tennis Association (STTA) is announcing a change of coaches to prepare the National Teams for the upcoming Rio Olympics 2016.

The women's coach Liu Jiayi has been appointed as the National Men's Team coach. The STTA is also pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Chen Zhibin, a 54 years old German Chinese with 11 years of coaching experience to be the Head Coach.

Said Ms Ellen Lee PBM, President of STTA, "We had to make some coaching changes in the run up to the Rio Olympics. Along with our many stakeholders, STTA have already invested so much in our teams and we would like our players to do their best to improve their Olympics chances. We urge Singaporeans who have put their belief and trust in us to continue to support us."

"Right now, the teams need to focus on training harder than before towards the Rio Olympics. Now that the issue of coaching support has been firmly resolved, the national players should continue with their high level training and execute the competition calendar, as scheduled," she added.

Chen's appointment comes after the national women's team request and his appointment has also been supported by the Singapore Sports Institute.

Chen was the head coach of the Netherlands women's team from 2009 to 2012 and he has led the Netherlands women's team to three consecutive wins from 2009 to 2011 at the European Table Tennis Championships. In 2012, the Netherlands women's team finished Top 6 in the World Team Table Tennis Championships. Under his charge, the Netherlands women's team also finished in Top 8 after their loss to China at the London Olympics 2012.

He also had a successful career as a player and he had represented China from 1983 to 1990. He achieved his career-high ranking of world number 5 in 1991. His other achievements include Asian Games 1990 - men's doubles champion together with Ma Wenge and he was also part of the team that scored the silver for China in the 1990 World Team Cup.

Chen also had several individual victories at the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) World Tours, such as: 1986 ITTF Yugoslavian Open singles Champion, 1987 ITTF Swedish Open singles champion, 1989 ITTF China Open singles champion and 1989 ITTF Hong Kong open singles champion.

Said Chen, "It is a privilege to have been selected by the STTA and Singapore Sports Institute to lead the Singapore women's team to the Rio Olympics. The Olympics is only 6 months away and my immediate task is to raise the level of play and the world ranking of the players. The players and I will do our utmost best to bring greater sporting glory to Singapore."

National women's player Feng Tianwei believes that Chen "will take our women's team to greater heights. She added, "Coach Chen has the coaching experience to take my playing career to the next level of success. Coach Chen and I also aim to achieve medals at the Rio Olympics and we wish to see the Singapore flag fly high at the upcoming Rio Olympics."

Meanwhile, the women's team will continue to be supported by Assistant Head Coach, Mr Hao Anlin.

Liu Jiayi has agreed to accept the challenging role as the Men's Team's Head Coach. The STTA is confident that Liu will serve as a wonderful role model to the male players. He is known as a hardworking coach and dedicated to his craft with special talent in grooming young players.

He said, "I am looking forward to my new appointment. What I want to do is improve every single practice, every single day, every single week for the men's team right up to Rio. We want to play our best for Singapore at the upcoming Rio Olympics 2016."

Said national men's stalwart Gao Ning, "Coach Liu has a positive attitude and mind set and I am sure that he will have a lot to offer to the Men's Team. I look forward to working closely with him."

The Men's Team will be supported by deputy coaches Wang Xiang and Zhu Jiang.

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