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## NEWS RELEASE

### **UOB Asia Limited Manages First Singapore Dollar Bond Issue By Korean Bank, H&CB**

**Singapore, 4 April 2000** - H&CB, Korea's largest bank (in terms of branch network), announced the launch of a Singapore dollar denominated bond today.

The bond issue - managed and underwritten by UOB Asia Limited (UOB Asia) - is the first Singapore dollar issue by a Korean bank and is also the first by a Korean entity. Proceeds from the issue will be used to prepay part of H&CB's Government Exchange Debt which is due in April 2001. The fixed rate bond will have a term of three (3) years and will raise S\$100 million.

H&CB (formerly known as Housing & Commercial Bank, Korea) is the most profitable bank in Korea in 1999, registering a net profit of Won 451 billion (approximately US\$408 million) and is rated the best bank in Korea by Euromoney (July 1999 edition).

During a recent roadshow, Mr Hong-Shik Chung, H&CB's Executive Vice President commented, "This is the first time that H&CB has chosen to issue a corporate bond in the Singapore capital market. We are excited to be able to offer Singapore investors the opportunity to participate in the strong growth prospects of H&CB in the Korean banking sector." He added, "The S\$ bond issue offers a competitive and alternative form of financing that will complement our recent Eurodollar financing, the latter having received overwhelming response from foreign banks and investors."

Mr Michael Sng, UOB Asia's Managing Director added, "In line with the Monetary Authority of Singapore's promotion of Singapore as an international financial centre, we have been actively pursuing regional issuers to tap the Singapore dollar bond market. We are very glad that H&CB will be the first Korean issue here and expect investors' response to be very positive for one of the premier names in Korea. We also believe that more Korean issuers will be attracted to Singapore, especially as there is a strong possibility of a further upgrade of Korea's credit rating, now that the country has recovered from the economic crisis." Korea's sovereign rating was upgraded to BBB+ by Fitch IBCA on 30 March 2000, up from BBB previously.

## **About H&CB**

H&CB was listed on the Korean Stock Exchange on 7 March 1996. It has a market capitalisation of Won 2,239 billion (approximately US\$2.03 billion) as at 30 March 2000 and total assets of Won 70,516 billion (approximately US\$63.8 billion) as at financial year-end 1999. H&CB is the largest provider of home mortgages in the Korean market and administers the Korean Government's National Housing Fund (NHF). Including the NHF portfolio, H&CB presently garners an 85% share of the Korean housing finance market. H&CB presently has 537 domestic branches serving a customer base of over 13 million, offices in New York, London and Tokyo, and a subsidiary in Hong Kong S.A.R.

H&CB is rated BB+(stable) by Standard & Poor's, Ba1(positive) by Moody's, and BBB- by Thomson Bankwatch, the highest rating among Korea's commercial banks.

## **About UOB Asia Limited**

UOB Asia Limited is the merchant banking arm of United Overseas Bank Limited. UOB Asia has strong capabilities in origination, underwriting and distribution of capital market issues, and has cultivated a large investor base that includes banks, insurance companies, asset managers and cash-rich corporations through its active involvement in the S\$ market.