

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“SIU DAI BY DEFAULT” – A NATIONAL MOVEMENT TO REDUCE SUGAR IN BEVERAGES

Singapore, 1 March 2024 – Two key coffeeshop associations in Singapore have pledged their support for the “*Siu Dai* by default” movement to encourage F&B operators to offer freshly prepared beverages, such as coffee, tea or malted drinks with less sugar as the norm.

2. Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, rallied the support of the Foochow Coffee Restaurant & Bar Merchants Association, and Kheng Keow Coffee Merchants Restaurant and Bar-Owners Association at a dialogue on 21 February 2024. The associations signed a joint statement of support at the dialogue, which outlined their commitment to advocate for the “*Siu Dai* by default” movement, by working with their members to reduce the sugar content in beverages. The joint statement of support can be found in [Annex A](#).

3. The Foochow Coffee Restaurant & Bar Merchants Association has over 300 members while Kheng Keow Coffee Merchants Restaurant and Bar-Owners Association has over 200 members under them. Together, they represent more than 50% of the coffeeshops in Singapore. Having both associations and their members on board the “*Siu Dai* by default” movement increases the availability and accessibility of ‘*siu dai*’ drinks.

Measures to reduce sugar intake

4. In Singapore, sugar sweetened beverages are the single biggest source of dietary sugar. More than half of Singaporeans’ daily sugar intake was from beverages, such as drinks containing added sugar and juices with naturally occurring sugars, of which 59% (17g) comes from pre-packaged beverages and 41% (12g) from freshly

prepared beverages. Excessive intake of sugar is linked to an increased risk of obesity and chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

5. The Ministry of Health and the Health Promotion Board (HPB) have put in place initiatives to help Singaporeans reduce their sugar intake. Since the announcement of the Nutri-Grade labelling requirements and advertising prohibitions in October 2019, our total sugar intake has reduced from 60g in 2018 prior to the announcement of the Nutri-Grade labelling and advertisement prohibition measures, to 56g in 2022.

6. Building on the momentum of the Nutri-Grade labelling requirements, HPB launched a “*Siu Dai* by default” movement last September to encourage F&B operators to offer beverages with less sugar as the norm, making it easier for consumers to reduce their overall sugar intake from drinks.

7. To date, HPB has distributed 4,500 ‘siu dai’ kits to drinks stalls. The kit contains recipe cards listing ‘siu dai’ drink formulations and spoons for measuring the right ‘siu dai’ sugar amount, to help F&B operators easily prepare ‘siu dai’ drinks. These stores can be identified by ‘siu dai’ decals and wobblers displayed at storefronts.

Engaging the industry

8. During the dialogue session, the associations noted that consumers are increasingly requesting for ‘siu dai’ or ‘kosong’ drinks.

9. They also highlighted the need for continued public education on the “*Siu Dai* by default” movement so that more consumers are aware and will demand for such lower sugar options.

10. At the close of the session, the associations signed a statement of support to come on board and advocate for the “*Siu Dai* by default” movement among their members, who are committed to effect the change.

Taking charge of our health

11. Getting Singaporeans to cut down the amount of sugar in beverages requires a concerted effort – individuals themselves must make healthier drink choices, and more F&B operators should come onboard the “*Siu Dai* by default” movement, to make more healthier beverages available and accessible.

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Joint Statement of Support

We,

Foochow Coffee Restaurant & Bar Merchants Association, and
Kheng Keow Coffee Merchants Restaurant and Bar-Owners Association,

support the government's efforts to reduce Singaporeans' sugar intake. To contribute towards these efforts and to help Singaporeans make healthier choices, **we will be an advocate of the “*Siu Dai* by default” movement, by working with our members and strongly encouraging them to:**

- a) Offer beverages with less sugar, condensed milk and evaporated milk as a default;
- b) Partner with HPB to promote *Siu Dai* beverages and drive consumer acceptance.

Annex B

Photos of the dialogue engagement session with Foochow Coffee Restaurant & Bar Merchants Association and Kheng Keow Coffee Merchants Restaurant and Bar-Owners Association



Mr Hong Poh Hin, Chairman of Foochow Coffee Restaurant and Bar Merchants Association (left), and Mr Kenneth Lee, President of Kheng Keow Coffee Merchants Restaurant and Bar-Owners Association (extreme right), welcome Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung to the dialogue session.



Minister Ong with members of the associations who were present at the dialogue session.



Minister Ong sharing more about the “*Siu Dai by default*” movement.



MOH and HPB with Foochow Coffee Restaurant & Bar Merchants Association and Kheng Keow Coffee Merchants Restaurant and Bar-Owners Association at the dialogue session.



Both associations committed to advocate for the “*Siu Dai* by default” movement, by working with their members to reduce the sugar content in beverages.

[Front row from left: Mr Hong Poh Hin, Chairman of Foochow Coffee Restaurant and Bar Merchants Association, Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, Mr Kenneth Lee, President of Kheng Keow Coffee Merchants Restaurant and Bar-Owners Association, and Mr Tay Choon Hong, Health Promotion Board Chief Executive Officer

Back row: Members from both associations]



'Siu dai' kit for drinks stalls – the kit contains recipe cards listing 'siu dai' drink formulations, spoons for measuring the right 'siu dai' sugar amount, and 'siu dai' decals and wobblers for participating stall owners to display at storefronts.