



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **‘Women on a Mission’ Trek Across the Altai Mountains of Mongolia In Support of Women Survivors of War**

**Singapore, March 2018** - An independent, self-funded team of 13 women from Singapore, Paris and Hong-Kong under the banner of **Women on a Mission (WOAM)**, a non-profit organisation headquartered in Singapore, which supports and empowers abused women, will embark on a ten-day horseback riding and trekking expedition on **May 22, 2018**, to visit the eagle hunters of the Altai Mountains of Mongolia. The expedition’s objective is to raise \$100,000 SGD for Women for Women International - UK, a charity which provides women survivors of war and conflict with the tools and resources to move from crisis and poverty to stability and self-sufficiency.



WOAM, now in its sixth year of operation, has raised over \$850,000 Singapore dollars to date, to support organisations that advance the position of women around the world. In addition to Women for Women International, the team also champions and raises funds for the following Singapore-based charities: AWARE - Singapore’s leading gender equality advocacy group; UN Women; Aidha - a Singapore NGO empowering domestic workers; and Pertapis Home for Women and Girls. The past

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eight WOAM expeditions have been to regions of the Himalayas, the Middle East, Africa and the Arctic Circle.

Brita Fernandez Schmidt, Executive Director of Women for Women International - UK stated, *“The women we work with live in some of the world’s most dangerous places - it can be hard for us to imagine their daily challenges. I find it so inspiring that WOAM push themselves far outside their comfort zone in order to raise money and awareness for women survivors of war. Each trek they take on is just as challenging as the last, and WOAM members truly go the extra mile to leverage their networks and raise incredible sums of money, which make a real difference to the women we serve.”*

For this next expedition to Mongolia, WOAM’s ninth to date, the women will begin their voyage in the country’s capital, Ulaanbaatar, and fly to Ulgii the largest city of the westernmost Bayan-Olgii province of Mongolia, where they will take part in an incredibly unique nomadic experience. The Kazakhs living in this area are the largest national minority and practice Sunni Islam. The Muslim influence is widespread, from street signs to clothes and food, which gives the town its diverse atmosphere. The team will stay in ger camps with local nomadic families, set against the vast landscapes of this remote area of Mongolia, which lies close to the border of Russia and Kazakhstan. Still untouched by mass tourism and deeply steeped in its cultural roots and traditions, the local people of the region hunt for food and fur with golden eagles. During their stay there, the WOAM team will learn about the art of hunting with these majestic birds, a thrilling, ancient practice that few people get a chance to experience.



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From Ölgii, the women will drive six hours on a hard track road to enter the Tavan Bogd national park with its backdrop of the Altai mountains. "Altai" means "Gold Mountain" in Mongolian and the range, a UNESCO world heritage site, is Mongolia's largest and highest with towering white mountains, glaciers, deep lush valleys, and large lakes - an idyllic place for trekking and horseback riding.

Once in the national park, the team will set off on horseback and trek deeper into the mountains to discover the region. Western Mongolia is still relatively unexplored and has retained a remarkably stable climate changing little since the last ice age. In addition, the mix of mammals has remained largely the same - with a few exceptions such as extinct Mammoths - making it one of the few places on earth to retain an ice age fauna. During this expedition, the group will travel amongst the region's stunning snow-capped mountains and camp beside pristine rivers and lakes with a chance to spot some of the wildlife that inhabit the area including marmots, hares and a number of birds such as Golden Eagles, Black Vultures and Falcons.

The journey will take the WOAM team in the vicinity the 20km long Potanin glacier, which is the largest and most imposing of the twenty glaciers in the Mongolian Altai range. They will climb up Mount Malchin (4050m) from where they will be able to see views of all the glaciated peaks of the region, as well as Russia and Kazakhstan to the North and Mount Khuiten to the South.



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Along the way the women may come cross the animistic Tuvan nomads who in Mongolia are regarded as one of the Uriankhai peoples. Tuvans have historically been cattle-herding nomads, tending to their herds of goats, sheep, camels, reindeer, cattle and yaks for the past thousands of years. They have traditionally lived in yurts covered by felt, or chums covered with birch bark or hide, that they relocate seasonally as they move to newer pastures. It's estimated that there are only around 3000 surviving Tuvan people left in Mongolia.



Finally, upon their return to Ulaanbaatar, the group will visit a women's centre for survivors of domestic violence. The charity is called NCAV, which stands for the National Centre Against Violence. NCAV is the only major organisation that deals with violence against women in Mongolia. It was established in 1995, and today has 16 branches throughout the country and runs five shelter houses available for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. The WOAM team will meet with the social workers running the centre to learn about the issues facing women in Mongolia. Additionally, the teammates will conduct leadership development and entrepreneurship workshops so as to share their own diverse life and career experiences with the women at the centre.

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Ultimately, WOAM's objective is to inspire women to want to leave their comfort zone, their families and homes for a certain period of time, while pushing their limits in an effort to rally support for a worthy cause. At the core of their culture is a passion for adventure and a deep respect and love of nature. They seek to travel and explore the world, and as a result make new discoveries, flourish as individuals, but most importantly, contribute to society. By travelling in such challenging conditions, WOAM hopes to bring international attention to the need for societies, governments and corporations to get involved and help end violence against women. The team passionately feels that this reality can no longer be tolerated, in any form, in any context, and by anyone around the globe.

WOAM Co-Founder Christine Amour-Levar stated *"Through our efforts we want to reach out to the women who are often left behind - those who struggle with poverty and violence, who are denied basic education and health care, and whose lives have been devastated by conflict. By raising funds for Women for Women International, we hope to support women survivors of war around the world who have quite literally lost everything. With over twenty brutal armed conflicts across the globe and unprecedented levels of violence against women, there has never been a greater need to support such initiatives that change the world, one woman at a time."*

## FIND OUT MORE

### About WOAM

WOAM is a non-profit organisation headquartered in Singapore, which combines challenging, self-funded, expeditions and treks to remote and majestic locations around the world, with inspirational fundraising events and workshops in Singapore and abroad, to raise awareness and funds for women survivors of war and to support and empower women who have been subjected to violence and abuse. WOAM's strategy is to organise and promote yearly campaigns and challenging expeditions - that are self-funded by each participant - to increase visibility, and to raise money for specific charities. WOAM partners with existing established non-profit institutions that already have well run programmes and structures in place dedicated to serving the underprivileged with a particular focus on women's issues. <http://www.womenmission.com>

### About Women for Women International (WfWI)

When there is an outbreak of war or violence, women suffer most - they experience trauma, sexual

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violence and the death of loved ones. After the conflict is over, the world's attention moves on, but these same women are left to rebuild their families and communities. Women for Women International supports women who live in some of the world's most dangerous places. Women enrol on the charity's year-long training programme, where they learn how to earn and save money, improve their family's health and make their voices heard at home and in their community.

Since 1993, the charity has helped more than 462,000 marginalised women survivors of war in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Sudan. With your help, women can graduate from the Women for Women International programme with the skills, knowledge and resources to become successful entrepreneurs. They will pass on their knowledge to their neighbours and children, creating a ripple effect. Find out more at [womenforwomen.org.uk](http://womenforwomen.org.uk) or follow @WomenforWomenUK on social media. Women for Women International is a UK registered charity no. 1115109.

### About the National Centre Against Violence (NCAV)

The National Centre Against Violence (NCAV), established in 1995, is a pioneer non-governmental organisation in Mongolia. They work towards ending domestic violence, and both protect and advocate for the survivors of violence. NCAV combines service delivery and policy advocacy. Nationally, the NCAV has: 11 Branches, 2 Shelters, 1 One-Stop Crisis Centre, 1 Centre for Training and Consultancy. NCAV works alongside the government to produce real, legislative change beginning with the Law on Combating Domestic Violence in 2004, and culminating in further amendments criminalising domestic violence coming into effect in February 2017. They continue to support police and government agencies in implementing these new legal frameworks and provide the following professional and holistic services based on the needs of survivors of domestic violence: Short-term shelter services, Psychological services, Social work services, Child protection services, Legal assistance and advice, Referral services, Hotline helpline. Find out more at <http://www.safefuture.mn/en/>

### Team Profiles

Thirteen intrepid women of diverse nationalities and backgrounds form the team of this 'Women on a Mission' Expedition to Mongolia 2018. While they are all incredibly well accomplished in their careers, they are equally passionate about supporting charitable causes and helping the less privileged. To read the team bios please click [here](#).

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The press release is issued by Skyy Creative Consultant Pte Ltd

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To see pictures of the team's journey, 'LIKE' their Facebook page, follow them on Twitter and Instagram:

<https://www.facebook.com/WOAMSingapore>

<https://twitter.com/WOAMSingapore>

<https://instagram.com/woamsingapore/>

To support the team please donate via their fundraising page: <https://www.justgiving.com/teams/woammongolia>

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