

# **Singapore's National Statement by Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - COP-19 / CMP-9, on 20th November 2013 in Warsaw, Poland at 3.30pm**

Thank you Madam Vice-Mr President,

I would like to express sympathy on behalf of all Singaporeans for the victims of Typhoon Haiyan which affected the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, the Philippines and Vietnam. I would also like to associate my delegation's position with the statements made by the President of Nauru on behalf of AOSIS. COP-19 in Warsaw is an essential step in our journey towards a new international climate agreement by 2015.

## **Sense of Urgency**

The recently released IPCC 5th Assessment Report (AR5) WGI predicted significant changes in rainfall patterns and increased global sea-level rise by 2100. Notably, the maximum projected increase in average surface temperatures across the world from 2081–2100 could reach the range of 2.6–4.8°C. We are near, or perhaps even past, the point at which the consequences will be irreversible.

We need to step up the pace of negotiations. Warsaw must build on the momentum from Durban and Doha and set the foundations for COP-20 in Lima and COP-21 in Paris and hopefully the 2015 global agreement. We must get things right from the very beginning.

Warsaw must send a strong signal of our collective commitment to strengthen the multilateral rules-based system to deal with climate change. A multilateral approach is the only effective way to deal with a global problem of this scale. In our view, stepping up the pace of progress must be made on three essential pillars, namely: (i) consolidation; (ii) convergence; and (iii) commitment.

## **Consolidation**

First – consolidation. Warsaw needs to build on efforts already made and implement previous decisions taken. This is essential for credibility and momentum. If we cannot fulfill past commitments, then future commitments will be meaningless. Actually, we have made significant progress. For example, we have seen improvement of the financial mechanism, the development and transfer of technologies, the enhancement of Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) frameworks and the strengthening of the various UNFCCC institutions. In particular, the new institutions, especially the Green Climate Fund (GCF), must be operationalised as soon as possible and deliver concrete results. Parties' commitments under the 2nd commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol must also be implemented and given legal effect as soon as possible. The credibility of the multilateral system depends on this. Effective implementation of the institutions and programmes we have created will provide a strong foundation for an ambitious and credible 2015 global agreement.

## **Convergence**

Second – convergence. Over the past year, we have achieved some progress in the negotiations on the new global agreement. In our view, Warsaw can forge growing consensus on the following key elements:

#### (i) No rewriting of the Convention

The new agreement should not be an excuse to rewrite the principles and provisions of the Framework Convention. We believe The Convention and its principles provide a strong and adequate foundation for enhanced action by all parties.

#### (ii) Universal Participation

The 2015 agreement must lead to universal participation. In our view, universal participation is essential for dealing with a global problem. Every party must be equally legally bound to make a contribution to the new global agreement, in accordance with the principles of the Convention. Naturally, contributions will vary, in accordance with the principles of “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities” (CBDR) and “respective capabilities”. This will require us to design a framework and process that is inclusive, facilitative and flexible.

#### (iii) National Circumstances

It is imperative for the 2015 agreement to take into account the unique national circumstances of countries, considering our unique context, constraints and contributions. Circumstances will vary between countries in areas such as size, population, resource endowments and economic structure. For example, not all countries can find alternatives to fossil fuels, which is crucial for reducing emissions significantly.

#### (iv) Nationally Determined Actions

Nationally determined actions are a requisite for equity and acceptability. We must find ways for all Parties to put forward their best possible contribution to the global mitigation effort based on the principles of CBDR and in accordance with their respective national priorities, objectives and circumstances. Such an approach would facilitate higher levels of ambition, by creating a positive virtuous cycle of actions by all Parties. Conversely, an approach based on a one-size-fits-all, top-down formula and/or criteria to determine mitigation contributions is neither practical nor politically feasible.

#### (v) Balanced Package

As for the last pillar, the agreement in 2015 must consist of a balanced package. What this means is that the package should not be focused only on mitigation, but should also accord equal consideration to issues of adaptation, finance, and the provision of means of implementation from developed countries to developing countries.

### **Commitment**

All countries must discharge our responsibilities in the global effort against climate change. As a sign of our strong commitment to forging the 2015 agreement, Warsaw should send a strong signal that all Parties would begin domestic preparations and stakeholder consultations for the submission of their mitigation commitments. Likewise, we must provide the enabling environment for Parties who have not yet done so to come forward and make pledges for the pre-2020 period.

#### Singapore is Committed

Singapore is fully committed to play our part, notwithstanding our constraints as a small city-state with limited potential for alternative or renewable energy. Prior to Copenhagen, we had pledged to

reduce emissions by 16% below 2020 business-as-usual (BAU) levels if there is a legally binding global agreement in which all countries implement their commitments in good faith. Ahead of this, we embarked on policies and measures to reduce our emissions by 7%-11% below 2020 BAU levels. This is a challenging target, given our extremely limited access to alternative energy sources. Nonetheless, we are currently on track towards meeting this target.

Singapore has already embarked on mitigation actions across various sectors. We do not subsidise energy. All consumers and businesses are fully motivated to conserve energy. For example, in the household sector, we have schemes to keep consumers informed of the energy efficiency of appliances, and ensure that all models of an appliance sold in Singapore meet a basic level of energy efficiency. In the transport sector, we are promoting the use of public transport, increasing the rail network, and have also introduced a “feebate” Carbon Emissions-based Vehicle scheme in 2013 to encourage the purchase of low-emissions cars and taxis.

We are also studying how our economic strategies and industrial structure can best respond to, and take advantage of, a low-carbon future.

We can act as a test-bed for innovative best practices in urban management and sustainability. Singapore has also been actively sharing experiences and expertise with other developing countries in the field of green development. Under the Singapore Cooperation Programme, we have provided technical assistance and capacity building programmes to more than 8000 officials from more than 170 developing countries and small island developing states since 1992, in subjects such as economic development, urban planning and water management.

We also organised the World Cities Summit as a global platform for government leaders and industry experts to address challenges of liveable and sustainable cities, share integrated urban solutions and forge new partnerships. Into its 4th edition, the biennial World Cities Summit will next be held in Singapore from 1 to 4 June 2014, in conjunction with the Singapore International Water Week and CleanEnviro Summit Singapore. Given the fact that more than half of humanity now resides in cities, building a workable, sustainable model city of the future, is a worthwhile challenge.

## **Closing**

The 2015 agreement must catalyse and incentivise strong and sustained domestic action by all countries. As we consolidate, converge on common points and make commitments, we should build a durable, balanced framework to strengthen the multilateral, rules-based system and secure a safer, more resilient future for everyone.