

Singapore's National Statement by Deputy Prime Minister, Coordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Home Affairs Mr Teo Chee Hean, at the UNFCCC COP-17 High Level Segment, in Durban, South Africa, 7 December 2011

Madame President,

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election as the President of this Conference. You have steered our work with great leadership and dignity. This conference in Durban is a proud moment, not only for South Africa, but also for the entire African continent. The results of this Conference will have an impact on people around the world. The expectations are high and we pledge to work with you to make this conference a success.

Let me say at the outset that Singapore associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the Chair of the Group of 77 and China, and also the statement made by Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, or AOSIS.

As we come to the final few days of this Conference in Durban, we need to push for a package of decisions that is not only balanced, but also ambitious. We have come very far, since the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted in 1992. As we look to the future, we must take another collective step forward. For a start, we have to implement what we have agreed to in Bali and in Cancun. These are the decisions that should guide our outcome in Durban. We would also like to put forward three guiding principles to shape the outcome in Durban. These are the principles of multilateralism, transparency and universal participation.

Multilateralism

Madame President, in Durban, we must send a clear and strong signal that we are strengthening the multilateral system to deal with climate change. Since 1992, the Framework Convention has put in place the foundation and principles for a rules-based multilateral system to combat climate change.

The Kyoto Protocol established in 1997 re-affirmed the existing rules-based multilateral system and provided an important legal foundation to guide our efforts. Without a strong multilateral system, the risks of unilateral actions are high. They will have serious distortive effects.

At Durban, it is thus important that we reaffirm our collective commitment to a multilateral rules-based system to deal with climate change. In this regard, the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol is critical. It is also vitally important that the Cancun decisions on mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology and capacity building are implemented. These outcomes will be critical for the credibility of the UNFCCC and the multilateral process. In particular, the decision to operationalise the Green Climate Fund is an essential component of a balanced package for Durban.

Transparency

The second principle that I wish to underline is transparency. It is important that there is enhanced transparency – not only in our commitments made under this process but also in the manner in which they are implemented. In this regard, a decision on a framework for Measurable, Reportable and Verifiable or MRV provisions will be an important outcome for Durban to monitor the

implementation of our individual and collective actions. Transparency is the key to building confidence and trust in the multilateral process. Greater transparency will also create greater reciprocity of action, leading to even more ambitious targets over time to address climate change.

Universal Participation

The third principle that I wish to highlight is universal participation. In our view, a truly multilateral system must encourage and help all countries to participate in the process. Ultimately, climate change is a global issue that requires all parties to play their part. All countries, big and small, can and must make a contribution to the global effort to combat climate change, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. This is one of the cardinal principles of the UNFCCC and it needs to be respected. What this means is that the developed countries have to show leadership in emissions reductions. But developing countries too can and must make a contribution to the process, taking into account their national circumstances and constraints. To date, nearly 90 countries, both developed and developing, have put forward mitigation pledges. This is a good start but we need to encourage others to come forward and make their pledges too.

Singapore's Efforts

Let me conclude by explaining briefly what Singapore is doing to help in this global process. As an island city-state, smaller than Lake Geneva in Switzerland, Singapore's high population density and small physical size sets the context of our mitigation efforts. We contribute less than 0.2% of global emissions, and lack the natural endowments of large countries. I would describe Singapore as an "alternative energy-disadvantaged" country. Our low-carbon energy options are limited. Hydroelectricity is not feasible given our relatively flat geography and lack of large rivers, and the potential for wave and wind energy is extremely limited.

Nonetheless, we have risen to the challenge and have taken early actions. For example, we have switched from fuel oil to natural gas, the cleanest form of fossil fuel, to generate our electricity since 2001 and convert all our waste to produce electricity. Today, more than 80% of our electricity is generated using natural gas. We have implemented measures to cap new vehicle registrations and electronic road pricing to limit usage. As a result of early actions, we have significantly improved our carbon intensity, which by 2007 was almost 40% below 1990 levels.

Singapore will continue to do its part to mitigate its emissions. We are working to meet our unconditional pledge to achieve 7-11% below BAU-levels by 2020. We have further pledged, in the context of a legally binding global agreement, to achieve 16% below BAU-levels by 2020. Given our early mitigation actions and difficulties to switch to alternatives, our pledge is a substantial commitment and will entail significant efforts from all sectors of our economy and our population.

But we will continue to push ahead. We are building up research capabilities in clean technologies, in particular, for sustainable urban living. Singapore is also a test-bed to support low carbon sustainable solutions such as smart grid, electric vehicles, solar panels and green buildings, some even with vertical gardens. As a member of both the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), we continue to work towards multi-lateral measures for carbon reductions in the international maritime and aviation sectors. Through these efforts, we hope to develop effective solutions that can address the challenges faced by Singapore, and also contribute to global efforts to mitigate climate change.

Madame President, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recently reminded us that extreme weather and climate events are likely to intensify. There is an urgent

need to curb the global rise in greenhouse gas emissions. As the distinguished Chair of AOSIS has said: "Our task has never been more urgent because what we are witnessing are emissions at their highest levels."As responsible members of the international community, we must not miss this opportunity to work together to arrest climate change -- for the sake of our children and successive generations.

Thank you.