

**STATEMENT BY MR WEIMIN GUO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SINGAPORE, AT THE AIS REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 4TH UN CONFERENCE FOR SIDS, 24 JULY 2023**

1 Excellencies and colleagues, I will provide an overview of a couple of the challenges that Singapore faces as a SIDS, namely food security and water supply, the solutions that we have found, and our partnerships with fellow SIDS, before going into what we think should be some of the priorities for the Fourth International Conference on SIDS.

2 At about 720 square kilometres, Singapore is a small and highly urbanised city-state. Due to competing land use needs, less than 1% of our land is used for agriculture and over 90% of our food is imported. This makes us, like many other SIDS, vulnerable to global food supply disruptions. To enhance our food security, Singapore has been working closely with our partners to diversify our import sources and increase local production.

3 Import source diversification: We continue to diversify our import sources by accrediting new food sources and facilitate connections between our importers with new overseas suppliers. Today, Singapore's food comes from more than 180 countries and regions. In addition, we are working with our food industry to strengthen their resilience through business continuity plans.

4 Local production: Local production is a key prong of Singapore's food security strategy as it helps to mitigate the impact of supply disruptions. Singapore has set the "30 by 30" goal to build the local agri-food industry's capability and capacity to produce 30% of our nutritional needs locally by 2030. The plan is underpinned by the strategies of (a) availing space and infrastructure; (b) facilitating regulatory reviews to support farm development; (c) driving research on sustainable urban food production, future foods, and food safety science and innovation to plug existing technological gaps; (d) encouraging ecosystem growth by incentivising farms to adopt sustainable farming technologies and developing a local pipeline of skilled agri-food workers; and (e) encouraging offtake for local produce.

5 For example, located in an industrial building, urban farm Sustenir grows temperate produce such as kale, cherry tomatoes, and strawberries within a tightly controlled environment that ensures optimal plant growth and year-round harvests.

6 Singapore is among the most water-stressed countries in the world. With achieving water sustainability being an imperative, Singapore takes an integrated and long-term approach towards water management to ensure a resilient and sustainable supply of water. Our water supply has been diversified through the Four National Taps: (a) water from local catchments; (b) imported water; (c) high-grade reclaimed water known as NEWater; and (d) desalinated water.

7 Operations of Singapore's fourth and fifth desalination plants – the Keppel Marina East Desalination Plant and Jurong Island Desalination Plant – commenced in July 2020 and April 2022 respectively. These new plants feature innovative designs and are more energy-efficient than conventional desalination plants. In addition, technologies such as biomimetic membranes, which mimic the way plants and animals extract freshwater from seawater, are also being validated and scaled up to further lower the energy required for desalination.

8 By 2065, Singapore's total water demand is expected to nearly double, with the non-domestic sector accounting for about 60%. We have taken steps to actively manage the increasing demand. For instance, since 2018, amendments have been made to the Mandatory Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme to cover a wider range of household appliances. Under the Climate Friendly Households Programme introduced in 2020, households are provided with vouchers to encourage switching to more water-efficient shower fittings. For the non-domestic sector, large water users are required to monitor their water efficiency and submit a mandatory Water Efficiency Management Plan annually. PUB, our National Water Agency, has developed water efficiency benchmarks and best practices guidelines for the various sectors using data collected from Water Efficiency Management Plans. We also launched the Singapore Green Labelling Scheme in 2019 for commercial washing appliances, with further minimum water efficiency requirements introduced in 2022. In addition, the Water Efficiency Fund was enhanced in 2020 to expand funding for water efficiency projects in businesses. From 2024, water recycling will be made mandatory for new projects in the water-intensive wafer fabrication, electronics, and biomedical industries.

9 As part of our decarbonisation plan, the water sector began replacing carbon-based energy with renewable energy in 2021 with the opening of Singapore’s first large-scale inland floating solar farm at our Tengeh Reservoir. The sector expects to abate approximately 90% of its carbon emissions by 2045 by adopting renewable energy and reducing electricity consumption. For the remaining 10%, it is exploring technologies to capture and remove carbon.

10 Singapore has provided technical assistance to SIDS since 1999 through the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP), our flagship platform to help developing countries in capacity building. We enhanced our SIDS technical assistance package in 2019 to better meet the development needs of fellow SIDS. The resulting Singapore Partnership for the SAMOA Pathway (SPa), which has been extended until 2024 to support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway through to its completion, has provided SIDS with priority placements in SCP capacity-building programmes, as well as targeted and tailor-made programmes.

11 We have offered higher quality programmes through enhanced partnerships with international organisations, including the UN, particularly on issues of key concern such as climate change and disaster risk reduction. One example is our partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction on a train-the-trainer’s programme for the Caribbean on “Understanding Risk Management and Risk Financing for Disaster Resilience”. The programme seeks to enhance cooperation and increase disaster risk-informed development planning, preparedness, and recovery in the Caribbean to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway. Over 11,000 SIDS officials have participated in SCP programmes, with over 2,200 officials participating from 2019 to 2023 under the SPa package.

12 A key priority of SIDS is to have mainstream adoption of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), which is being developed by the High-Level Panel of Experts on the MVI established by the President of the 76<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly. The MVI will go beyond the use of GDP/GNI per capita as the traditional measure of development, thereby mitigating some of the disadvantages facing SIDS when trying to access development and financial support on concessional terms.

13 Another priority is to leverage digitalisation to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs among SIDS. It is important that SIDS play an active role to ensure that our voices are heard. In particular, the SIDS Conference could focus on two areas: First, capacity-building aimed at narrowing the digital

divide affecting SIDS. A potential platform could be established to provide learning opportunities, exchange experiences, and support innovation. Second, the Global Digital Compact to be adopted at the Summit of the Future in 2024 is another important process that SIDS should be engaged in. An action-oriented and ambitious Global Digital Compact will be key to harnessing digital technologies to advance sustainable development and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in SIDS. The outcomes of the 4<sup>th</sup> SIDS Conference should therefore contribute towards the development of the Global Digital Compact.

14 Thank you.