

**STATEMENT BY MR MARK SEAH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE 4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

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Thank you, Chair.

Singapore aligns itself with the statements made by Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

2 I also thank the co-chairs of the preparatory committee for the 4<sup>th</sup> SIDS Conference: Maldives and New Zealand, host of the conference Antigua and Barbuda, Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua, and High Representative Rabab Fatima for convening the first session of the preparatory committee's work. Our discussions this week are highly important for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as we are shaping our programme of action for the next decade.

3 Since the last Conference in 2014, SIDS have made progress in pursuing sustainable and resilient growth and development. However, the world continues to face numerous challenges, including geopolitical tensions, macroeconomic uncertainty, food and energy insecurity, disinformation and misinformation, as well as climate change.

4 SIDS, in particular, are disproportionately affected by many of these challenges. We must therefore design an ambitious programme of action that will benefit SIDS. Let me lay out three key priorities.

5 First, climate change. As a small, low-lying island state, climate change is a real threat to Singapore. Significant increase in sea levels, temperatures, and extreme

weather patterns could undo our work in sustainable development. Singapore has thus remained steadfast in climate action. We have raised our climate ambition to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, and are pursuing renewable energy. But we cannot solve the climate crisis alone. We need shared ambition, and shared commitment, to do so. And the outcome document for the Conference must reflect this. We hope to see strong support for the effective implementation of the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, building on the outcomes of COP-28.

6 Second, digitalisation. Digitalisation and technology are key to overcoming the various limitations and constraints faced by SIDS, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and building a resilient future. Digital solutions have vast potential to drive growth. We must close the digital divide. International cooperation in the digital domain will also be essential to enhance digital transformation, and to harness digitalisation to enable sustainable development.

7 Third, multidimensional vulnerability. All countries are vulnerable, but all in different ways. It is important that we recognize that. Yet while the international community has acknowledged vulnerability as a serious obstacle to development, there remains no definitive benchmark to measure structural vulnerability or lack of resilience across multiple dimensions. The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) can fill this gap. It can provide a better diagnosis of challenges faced by developing countries, and paint a clearer picture of their needs. It does not replace existing measures of development, but serves as a complementary tool to build a more holistic understanding of development challenges and what is required to address them. We call on the international community to lend its support for the MVI and its implementation.

Mr Chair,

8 Singapore remains committed to addressing the challenges that the world faces.

It is precisely why we remain committed to an ambitious, action-oriented programme of action for SIDS. We look forward to robust discussions.

9 Thank you.

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