

**NATIONAL STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE, DR VIVIAN BALAKRISHNAN,  
AT THE HIGH LEVEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14  
IN NEW YORK ON 8 JUNE 2017**

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Mr President

Excellencies

Distinguished delegates

1        It is an honour to address this Conference on behalf of Singapore. It has been two years since the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is time to take stock of the progress we have made on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 - the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources.

2 For a small island-state like Singapore, the oceans and seas are inextricably linked to our survival and well being. The oceans provide livelihood for millions of people, enable food security and maritime trade, regulate the climate, and are an important source of renewable energy. However, the oceans face increasing threats including overfishing, climate change and marine pollution.

3 These are serious issues for Singapore and our fellow small island developing States. We have no buffer and no hinterland. An increase in sea-level, coastal degradation or marine pollution will impact us severely. For this reason, Singapore made a voluntary contribution to the Conference Trust Fund to enable other small island developing States to be represented at this Conference; to have their voices heard on matters concerning our survival.

## Call for Action

4 I would like to congratulate all delegations for working together to conclude the **Call for Action**. Singapore is privileged to have worked with Portugal to facilitate the negotiations on the outcome document. The Call for Action demonstrates our collective determination to conserve and sustainably use our oceans and seas.

## Sustainable Use of the Oceans

5 However, the smart formulation of words alone cannot resolve the challenges we face. We need guiding principles to follow through on our commitments.

6        First, we need universal adherence to international law. Singapore reaffirms the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework for all the activities in the oceans and seas. A rules-based international order provides the necessary framework for all States to operate on a common basis in the global environment. This is important even as we broaden our understanding of oceans issues to include new areas such as the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, or “**BBNJ**”. In line with this approach, Singapore, together with Jamaica, Argentina, the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, and the UN Office of Legal Affairs, organised an event on 6 June to discuss how UNCLOS - the “constitution for the oceans” - can play a central role in our efforts to achieve Goal 14. I am pleased to report that the event saw

lively discussions that contribute to the broader discourse on the implementation of Goal 14.

7        Second, we need to balance economic growth, environmental sustainability and strengthening of the ocean ecosystems. Science and data are key to enhancing our understanding of the oceans.

8        Third, challenges involving global commons, including climate change and ocean conservation, require collective international solutions. We cannot solve these challenges unilaterally. All States and stakeholders must cooperate. I am glad to note that we are deepening such conversations through the seven partnership dialogues at this Conference, and the voluntary commitments by stakeholders.

## The Case of Singapore

9 Sustainable development has been part of Singapore's DNA even before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. On this timely occasion, I would like to reaffirm Singapore's commitment to the Paris Agreement and the Paris Pledge, under which we aim to reduce our emissions intensity by 36% from 2005 levels by 2030. Singapore is also committed to implement a carbon tax by 2019.

10 As one of the world's busiest ports, Singapore has also undertaken measures to protect our marine environment. The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) was one of the world's first maritime administrations to launch a comprehensive pro-environment initiative, known as the Maritime Singapore Green Initiative, to reduce the environmental impact of shipping

activities. Singapore is also putting in place measures to become a LNG bunker ready port by 2020, which will reduce carbon dioxide emissions and contribute to cleaner and greener shipping.

11 Marine debris is a major problem for Singapore. Apart from conducting surveys and installing monitoring equipment, we intend to encourage data contribution by the public and raise public awareness through an integrated national citizen science programme.

12 Our efforts have borne fruit in the form of our rich marine biodiversity. A total of 255 species of hard coral have been recorded in our waters, which constitute about 40% of the species of corals found in Southeast Asia, and about a third of the global total. We also harbour 12 species of sea grass in our waters, or 52% of the species found in the Indo-Pacific region.

13 Singapore will soon have its own marine turtle hatchery on one of our offshore islands in 2018. The turtle hatchery aims to provide *in situ* incubation facilities for “at risk” sea turtles to increase the chances of them successfully hatching. Apart from promoting marine scientific research, the hatchery will conduct public education on sea turtle conservation.

### International Partnerships

14 Collaboration and partnership have proven effective in producing new programmes and initiatives that leverage each country’s unique strengths and experiences. To this end, Singapore is on a constant lookout for like-minded partners to collaborate with on sustainable development efforts.

15 Under the ambit of the Australia-Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), Singapore and Australia have conducted fishing vessel inspection training courses for ASEAN fisheries managers to build capacity in fishery enforcement.

16 The Singapore Maritime and Port Authority will also be partnering the International Maritime Organisation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Future Ready Shipping Conference in Singapore this September. It will bring together maritime leaders from developed and developing countries to discuss energy efficient technologies and technology transfer, and provide a platform for capacity building for small island developing States.

17 Singapore has benefitted from technical assistance provided by UN agencies such as the UN Development

Programme. Singapore believes in paying this forward, and has established the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) in 1992 to provide training and capacity building courses for our partners. In 2015, we went a step further and launched the Sustainable Development Programme (SDP) under the SCP to support the 2030 Agenda, including courses on climate change adaptation strategies and water quality management. We will launch a course on Sustainable Oceans and Marine Resources next month to cover issues such as climate change and marine biodiversity conservation.

18 Last but not least, Singapore will be undertaking a voluntary national review on our implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the High Level Political Forum of the Economic and Social Council in 2018, including the implementation of Goal 14. The HLPF has an important role to

play in monitoring progress in the implementation of Goal 14.

19 In closing, the issue of oceans is a pertinent and pressing one. This Conference represents the first step in what will be a long journey towards the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Singapore calls on all Member States, UN agencies, research bodies, the private sector, the donor community and other stakeholders to come together to protect our oceans and seas for the benefit of our people and our future generations.

20 Thank you.

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