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STATEMENT BY THE SINGAPORE DELEGATION

AT THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 14TH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD-14), 1-12 MAY 2006, NEW YORK

*Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

Introduction

1 On behalf of the delegation of Singapore, allow me to first commend the Chair, and his superb team, for skillfully guiding the proceedings of the fourteenth session of the CSD thus far.

Mr Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

2 The four themes being discussed at this session of the CSD – energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution and atmosphere, and climate change – are relevant and important to Singapore. We thought we could share with you Singapore's experiences as we discuss the way forward in addressing barriers and constraints and guidance on priority areas.

Industrial Development

3 Like many developing countries, in the 1960s and 1970s, our government prioritized rapid industrial development – our survival depended on having a robust economy that could generate jobs for the growing population. However, the environment and public health were not ignored. For a small island developing country like ours, with limited natural resources, environmental considerations such as air quality and public health have a tangible effect on our appeal as a city for business and industry.

4 As early as 1969, our then Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew had stated that our republic “*must continue to be clean and green, spruce and well maintained... this is the backdrop for success*”. Hence, from the earliest days of nationhood, we have recognized the co-dependent bond between economic growth and progress in the environmental arena and community well-being – which we now identify as the three pillars of sustainable development.

Mr Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5 Let me now share with you how Singapore is planning the way forward with respect to energy, air pollution and climate change.

Energy for Sustainable Development

6 In Singapore, we have moved away from the more carbon-intensive fuel oil to the less carbon-intensive and more efficient natural gas for power generation. The proportion of natural gas in our fuel mix has grown from 19% in 2000 to more than 70% last year.

7 Other than natural gas, Singapore derives about 2% of our electricity supply from our waste-to-energy incineration plants. Alternative energy is of course another sustainable energy option and we welcome companies/organisations to test-bed their new technologies in Singapore.

8 Energy efficiency will remain a key strategy towards our energy sustainability in the future. With rising energy prices, there is growing interest among stakeholders to design and construct environmentally sustainable buildings that not only save money and reduce harmful emissions, but also offer good working environment for its occupants. Energy efficiency makes economic and environmental sense. Singapore will continue to seek sustainable energy solutions to help us reduce the environmental impact of energy production and use.

9 Singapore will also do our part to work with fellow cities in ASEAN to achieve environmental sustainability of our region through our chairmanship of the ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable Cities.

Air Pollution and Atmosphere

Mr Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

10 In the management of air pollution, Singapore has on the whole enjoyed good air quality despite the occasional regional haze.

11 Prevention, monitoring, enforcement and education encapsulate Singapore's strategy in the management of air pollution. But while this strategy has served us well so far, we are now faced with three major challenges which must be overcome before we can continue enjoying the clean air to which we have grown accustomed. These are (i) our vulnerability to transboundary pollution; (ii) particulate matter 2.5 which studies have shown to be linked to respiratory and cardiovascular problems.

12 Singapore has been working with our neighbours to tackle transboundary air pollution and will continue to do so. However, the main strategies to address particulate matter 2.5 lie in cleaner fuels and setting more stringent emission standards. Euro IV emission standards for new diesel vehicles will be introduced in Oct 2006, to reduce the levels of air pollutants.

In addition, we will continue to work with our industries and review the emission standards of mobile and stationary sources regularly so as to keep up with emerging pollutants.

Climate Change

13 On global climate change, Singapore shares the global concern and is supportive of the various international efforts taken to address this challenge by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As a responsible citizen of the international community, Singapore wants to do its part to contribute to global efforts to fight climate change.

14 We are a party to both the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. The Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, Singapore, is spearheading the development of a holistic climate change strategy that actively engages the people and private sectors in climate change action. We are taking domestic action on climate change such as mandating energy labelling for refrigerators and air-conditioners and introducing a Climate Change Awareness Programme to increase public awareness of the issue.

Conclusion

Mr Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

16 As I had noted earlier, the four themes being discussed here are relevant and important to Singapore. As a small country, with limited natural resources, environmental considerations such as air quality and public health have a tangible effect on Singapore's appeal as a city for business and industry.

17 Singapore will continue to seek new and innovative ways to derive clean energy for development, enhance air pollution amelioration and contribute to global initiatives on climate change. My delegation and I have learnt much from the many useful contributions made by distinguished representatives during this session thus far and we look forward to hearing more from the speakers after me. With that, ladies and gentlemen, I conclude.