

**NATIONAL STATEMENT BY
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER RESOURCES
OF SINGAPORE
MR MASAGOS ZULKIFLI,
AT THE 2018 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,
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Mr President,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) represents a turning point for all our nations and for our planet. It provides a clear framework for national action and international partnership. As elected representatives, each one of us has the responsibility to show leadership and take ownership of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We also have the responsibility to work in partnership with our people and businesses, and work collaboratively with other members of the international community. Ultimately, the 2030 Agenda is about transforming the lives of our people.

2. Singapore has always put its people at the centre of all its development policies. Indeed, the story of Singapore's economic transformation is really a story about uplifting the lives of our people, by giving them access to education, health, housing, employment as well as a clean environment. Our approach to policy making and governance is a pragmatic one, focusing on outcomes, not ideology, one aimed at fostering a harmonious, inclusive and prosperous society. Singapore is both a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) and a highly urbanised and densely-populated city-state. Despite our constraints, Singapore pursued sustainable development as a necessity, right from our independence in 1965.
3. There are three elements to Singapore's development approach.

4. **First**, Singapore has always balanced economic development with environmental protection and social inclusion. Even in the early years when we needed investments, we have never compromised on our environmental standards. This year, we made a significant decision to implement an economy-wide carbon tax without exemption from 2019. This will accelerate innovation and energy efficiency. Our aim is to shift our economy and society towards a sustainable, low-carbon future.

5. **Second**, we place great emphasis on pursuing a long-term, integrated approach to policy planning and implementation. Being one of the most water-stressed countries in the world, we have worked hard and made heavy investments to ensure our water resilience and sustainability. Today, we have a diversified supply of water that includes imported water from Malaysia, local water catchments, desalination and recycling of waste water, known as NEWater.

6. **Third**, Singapore's policy formulation and implementation is underpinned by collaborative multi-stakeholder partnerships. Climate change and sustainability cannot be tackled by governments alone. This is why we have designated 2018 as the Year of Climate Action in Singapore, to increase awareness and spur action across all segments of society. Since its launch in January, close to **a quarter of a million [TBC on speech day]** Singaporeans, business corporations and Civil Society Organisations have pledged to take climate action and reduce their carbon footprint.

7. Singapore is also strongly committed to working in partnership with other countries to help them achieve the 2030 Agenda. As a fledgling nation, Singapore benefitted from technical assistance from UN agencies. To pay it forward, we started the Singapore Cooperation Programme in 1992 to share our development experience with fellow developing countries; almost 120,000 officials have participated and benefited from this programme.

8. Let me conclude. The goals of the 2030 Agenda represent the collective aspirations of our global community. Their unprecedented ambition and scale require our unwavering commitment. Singapore will continue to work with our friends and partners to help uplift the lives of people around the world in this noble enterprise.

Thank you.