

**Country Statement by H.E. Chua Siew San, Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to the Kingdom of Thailand, at the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, 28 – 29 May 2015**

Theme: “Balancing the Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development: From Integration to Implementation”

[Mr. Chairman]

Excellencies

Distinguished delegates

The Singapore delegation would like to express our appreciation to the United Nations ESCAP for organising the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the ESCAP Commission, and to the Government of Thailand for its warm hospitality.

Mr. Chairman,

Singapore strongly believes in the importance of achieving sustainable development across the three dimensions – social, economic and environmental. Our world today is grappling with complex challenges such as rapid urbanisation and climate change. We need comprehensive, holistic and carefully targeted government policies to ensure long term and sustainable growth. Singapore feels the weight of these challenges intensely because of our small land size, complexity as a multiethnic society, and lack of basic natural resources like water. Since our independence, sustainable development has been at the heart of Singapore’s nation-building efforts. Our development is the result of constant experimentation and readjustment, guided by long-term strategic thinking. Even in our early years under the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore’s first Prime Minister, we dreamed of Singapore as a Garden City. From the start, greening policies had equal priority to housing, education and public health, to ensure that all Singaporeans, whether rich or poor, had healthy and attractive surroundings. Our policies are not rigid, and evolve to meet the emerging needs and expectations of our citizens. But sustainability remains central to Singapore’s development efforts.

In November last year, we revised our Sustainable Singapore Blueprint to ensure its currency and continued relevance. Our Blueprint balances the three dimensions of sustainable development; it envisions Singapore to be “a liveable and endearing home, a vibrant and sustainable city, [and] an active

and gracious community". Part of our vision by 2030 is for 9 in 10 homes in Singapore to be within 10-minutes' walk of a park, so Singaporeans can maintain active lifestyles, greater access to public spaces, and a stronger sense of community. Due to our high population density, technology is essential to achieving this goal. This year, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong inaugurated the Smart Nation Programme Office. One priority is to find breakthrough solutions in mobility, transportation and healthcare, to ensure a better quality of life for all residents. Singapore is land-scarce and we cannot build roads indefinitely. Technology offers smarter solutions to make transport faster and greener. By providing useful information to commuters and improving responsive management of public transport systems, we can bring Singapore closer to a "car-light" society. Telemedicine systems and the Smart Elderly Monitoring and Alert System will enhance care for our elderly, helping them enjoy greater independence in their twilight years.

Mr. Chairman,

Singapore is also committed to sustainable development at the international level. We participate actively in the on-going negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and are firm supporters of the Sustainable Development Goals on water and sanitation, and urbanisation. Through the Singapore Cooperation Programme and the Centre for Liveable Cities, we continue to share our experiences on governance, urban management, environmental sustainability and water resource management. We launched a dedicated technical assistance package last year for fellow small island developing states, focusing on our common obstacles to sustainable development. The World Cities Summit, Singapore International Water Week, and the CleanEnviro Summit Singapore are also ways in which we support the cause of sustainable urbanisation. This year, we launched the World Cities Summit Young Leaders Symposium to bring the leaders of tomorrow into this important conversation.

Mr. Chairman,

Pursuing sustainable development is by no means easy. Several factors will be critical. First, there must be a paradigm shift in our mindsets from a focus on the "good to have" to the "must have". Second, there must be political will and bold leadership, underpinned by good governance, long-term thinking and the rule of law. Third, there must be a concerted effort involving not only governments, but also the private sector and ordinary citizens.

World leaders will be gathering in New York to discuss the Post 2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals at the UN Summit

this September. There is no better time to act than now. ESCAP is a valuable partner in promoting intra-regional collaboration to advance our common goal of sustainable development. Singapore will continue to participate constructively in discussions and seek opportunities with ESCAP and its member countries to build a sustainable future. Let us all work together to provide our successor generations with the “future we want”.

Thank you.