

**Country Statement by the Republic of Singapore at the 72nd session of the
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok,
15 - 19 May 2016**

Theme: "Science, technology and innovation for sustainable development"

[Mr. Chairman]

Excellencies

Distinguished delegates

The Singapore delegation would like to express our appreciation to the United Nations ESCAP for organising the 72nd session of the ESCAP Commission, and to the Government of Thailand for its warm hospitality.

Mr. Chairman,

The theme of "science, technology and innovation" is ever relevant for sustainable development. Fast changing technologies have heightened volatility in our globalised world. The internet, robotics and big data analytics will continue to transform the way we live, work, and organise ourselves. Today, there are powerful statistical tools to address age-old problems of epidemiological disease. More than 40 percent of the world is connected online, and many of us use ICT applications daily to access information, banking, entertainment, and to keep in touch.

As a resource-scarce city-state without a natural hinterland, Singapore's survival hinges on our integration into the global economy and maintaining our relevance to the world. In our short 50 years of nationhood, we moved from a labour-intensive economy in the 60s to the knowledge-based, innovation-driven growth we pursue today. We tried to find smart solutions to meet developmental challenges, such as our existential vulnerability of water dependence. Our new technologies on desalination and recycling of used water now supply half our water needs, and we aim to reach self-sufficiency by 2060.

To accelerate our next phase of development, Singapore is working to remain ahead of the technological revolution. Through extensive and integrated use of technology, we aim to build the world's first Smart Nation to retool our economy, improve the quality of life in our densely-populated city, and build

stronger communities. Our vision is a Singapore where people live meaningful and fulfilled lives enabled by technology, and where there are opportunities for all.

More than 90% of Singapore homes already have broadband internet, and we are working to ensure that no one is left behind. Our senior citizens and persons with disabilities can now enjoy longer crossing times at traffic junctions by a simple tap of a card on traffic light poles. There is a new Monitoring and Alert System to help the elderly safely enjoy greater independence. Public booths with online government services help low income families to get the same access as everyone else. We also harness technology to improve our environment and manage our adaptation to climate change. For example, we piloted an e-service last year that gives planners access to real-time environmental information such as humidity and air quality.

Singapore also believes that the lifeblood of an innovative culture is education. Last year, to prepare Singaporeans for a more dynamic economic landscape, we launched the SkillsFuture movement to transform our learning culture and emphasise the mastery of skills and lifelong learning. Each Singaporean above 25 has a personal SkillsFuture Credit account to fund training courses for their professional development. Students will receive enhanced education and career guidance, with more pathways to cater to different strengths and interests. At work, training subsidies help Singaporeans stay relevant in their jobs, while new job entrants can access structured on-the-job training, and more experienced professionals can apply for SkillsFuture study awards and fellowships.

Mr Chairman,

Singapore is committed to sustainable development at the regional and international level. Through the Singapore Cooperation Programme, Singapore continues to share our experiences, policy adaptations and innovations on governance, urban management, environmental sustainability and water resource management with other developing countries. Singapore also worked closely with our fellow ASEAN member states to develop the ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2020. ASEAN's vision is to propel the region towards a digitally enabled economy that is secure, sustainable, and transformative; and to enable an innovative, inclusive and integrated ASEAN Community.

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.

Thank you.

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