

National Statement of Singapore Delivered by Dr Vivian Balakrishnan
Minister for the Environment and Water Resources at the UNFCCC
COP-20 High Level Segment, 9 December 2014, Lima, Peru

Mr President,

1. I congratulate Minister Manuel Pulgar-Vidal on your election as the President of this Conference and add Singapore's appreciation to the government and people of Peru for the warm hospitality and meticulous arrangements at this Conference.

Moment for action

2. The IPCC's 5th Assessment Report provides a stark warning of the consequences if we do not limit global warming to below 1.5 or 2°C. This COP-20 is a crucial test of whether we stay on-track or let ourselves get distracted. It is incumbent all Parties to be pragmatic and constructive. We need to affirm the concepts of 'applicable to all' and 'universal participation'. While we cannot solve everything here in Lima, it would be negligent of us to delay what we can agree upfront. We must try to build momentum to clear a pathway to Paris next year.

Way Forward

3. As we work towards a new global agreement, it is important to remember that we are not starting from scratch. We are building on the foundation of the UNFCCC. To build a durable and effective post-2020 regime, we should be prepared to give each other some assurances:

- (i) First, that the principles and provisions of the Convention shall be upheld *in toto*. This means that the previously achieved fine balance in the Convention should not be wrecked by selective cherry-picking of partisan interests. We should simply use the entire Framework Convention, as is, as the durable foundation for the new regime;
- (ii) Second, that we recognise each other's unique national circumstances and respect that we will all put forward our best efforts in our INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions); and
- (iii) Third, that we are all in this together with universal participation. There should not be any free-riders in Paris. If a country faces difficulties, help can be rendered, but everyone would have to be on board.

4. In our view, these assurances will help drive momentum towards the following outcomes in Lima:

- (iv) First, a decision on upfront information to provide clarity, transparency and understanding of INDCs. But we should not unwittingly create undue burden that would prevent countries from tabling INDCs next year. The idea that it is “without prejudice to the legal form” gives us some room to achieve balance.
- (v) Second, the draft elements of a negotiating text for the 2015 agreement. We need to provide assurances that the issues which are important to different stakeholders are not ignored. At the same time, those of us making demands must be willing to accept a middle path to find consensus. No agreement can be built by simply insisting on our original positions.
- (vi) Third, the enhancement of pre-2020 ambition. As this is the base for our post-2020 goals, we should not avoid doing more before 2020, but when that happens, the 2015 agreement should recognise early actions of countries. Otherwise, countries will have perverse incentives to delay action until the new agreement is implemented in 2020.

Singapore’s Commitment

5. Our collective efforts must be aimed at supporting the multilateral system for climate change. The SIDS (Small Island Developing States), of which Singapore is a member, contribute very little to global emissions but we will play our part. Singapore generates relatively low levels of carbon emissions per GDP dollar in the world, ranking 113th out of 140 countries¹. From 2000 to 2010, our carbon intensity decreased by 30%, which compares favourably with the global average decrease of 0.12%. We ratified the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol on 23 September 2014 and will submit our INDC in a timely manner before COP-21. Our Biennial Update Report which we submitted this week highlights our strategies and progress to meet our pre-2020 pledge. The Sustainable Singapore Blueprint 2015 just launched in November 2014 updates our plans, especially in areas such as energy efficiency and climate resilience. We are also studying how our economic strategies and industrial structure can best respond to, and take advantage of, a low-carbon future as we stabilise our emissions over the long term.

¹ Source: IEA Key World Energy Statistics, 2014.

Closing

6. Mr President, please allow me to reiterate Singapore's appreciation and support for Peru's COP Presidency. It is critical that Lima COP-20 be associated with trust and good faith in order to prepare for the road to Paris. We can achieve this by delivering on the incremental steps we tasked ourselves in Warsaw. On our part, Singapore will do our best to work with the President, the Co-Chairs and all Parties to deliver on these objectives.

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