

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR TAN CHUAN-JIN, MINISTER OF STATE
FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AT ASIAN NETWORK OF MAJOR CITIES 21 (ANMC21)
SAT, 30 JUNE 2012, MARINA BAY SANDS**

Your Excellency Mr Shintaro Ishihara

Excellencies

Senior Representatives from member cities of the ANMC21

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

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Good Morning. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 11th Plenary Meeting of the ANMC21 in Singapore. We are honoured to be hosting the 11th edition of the Meeting this year. Before we commence with proceedings, please allow me to share my thoughts and set the context for our discussions later on.

Cities and Transnational Challenges

3 The world we live in is an integrated and connected community. That is why many transnational challenges such as the global financial crisis that we face today increasingly require cross-border solutions that cut across different sovereignties. Solutions cannot be found within just one country alone. More importantly, the role of cities can only become more significant as the rural-urban migration intensifies. According to a projection by the United Nations, by 2050 the world's population will reach 9 billion, with 70% expected to live in cities.¹

4 As more and more of the world's population live in urban centres from Africa to Asia, what cities do in terms of urban development will have a very significant impact on how the world is able to address global challenges such as climate change.

Urban Sustainability and Asian Cities

5 As one of the fastest growing urban regions, Asian cities will play an increasingly important role in global urban developments. One

¹ Source: <http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=6040&catid=7&typeid=5>

major challenge is how Asian cities cope with a growing urban population. An overcrowded city puts a very severe strain on land use management, the environment and importantly, social relations – the fabric that keeps our society together.

6 This year’s theme on “Balancing Cities’ Economic Growth with Social and Environmental Needs” is therefore a timely and relevant one. As Asian cities grow economically, the strain on public infrastructure, environment and social relations within the community will increase as more and more people flock to the cities to find jobs and in search of a better life for themselves and families.

7 City leaders will need to strike a delicate balance between economic growth on one hand, and liveability on the other. Urban Sustainability is therefore key to ensuring continued growth while balancing economic, social and environmental objectives, thus providing the premise for our policy dialogue discussion today.

The Importance of Inter-City Networks

8 Indeed, Asian cities have much to offer in terms of how we have tackled some of our unique urban challenges through sustainability

initiatives. Through inter-city networks, cities can, and should learn from each other. This dynamic exchange of knowledge and best practices will enable all cities to benefit from each other's experiences.

9 In this regard, the Asian Network of Major Cities 21 has established itself as a platform for inter-city networking in which our members share best practices and participate in collaborative joint projects. As host of this year's ANMC21 Plenary Meeting, co-locating the event with the World Cities Summit, or WCS for short, has obvious synergies. ANMC21 and WCS have similar objectives in their emphasis on sustainable urban development. The WCS Mayors Forum, which some of you would be attending tomorrow, is a good opportunity to network and share best practices with cities from other regions beyond the ANMC21 platform, such as from Latin America.

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10 City networks such as ANMC21 and WCS Mayors Forum are important components of an emerging global architecture of city-to-city relations. With our very diverse cultures and emphasis on urban sustainability, I believe Asian cities can and should influence the trajectory of urban developments in other parts of the world. I am confident that our discussions today would yield new insights and fresh perspectives that can help us to build better cities of tomorrow.

Conclusion

11 I wish all of you a fruitful and enjoyable stay in Singapore and trust that you would take home some of the useful insights and best practices on urban and sustainability issues shared at the various platforms in this coming week.

12 Finally, I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Secretariat from Tokyo, for their guidance in helping Singapore organise this meeting, as well as to member cities for all your continued support.

Thank you very much.



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