

OPENING ADDRESS BY MR DESMOND LEE, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE AND THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME AT HABITAT III, QUITO, ECUADOR ON 18 OCTOBER 2016, 10AM

Dr. Joan Clos

Executive Director UN-Habitat

Your Excellencies

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

1 I am honoured that all of you have come to witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of Singapore and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

2 This MOU outlines the partnership between the Singapore Government and UN-Habitat, to develop International Capacity Development Programmes. Specifically, it establishes a framework for Singapore and emerging cities from developing regions, to share principles and practical examples with each other on liveability and sustainability within urban system and this is part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda.

3 This is not the first time that Singapore and United Nations (UN) partnered together. Singapore's relationship with the UN goes back to over 50 years ago. A developing city state, we were a beneficiary of technical assistance from our UN colleagues, who helped lay the foundation of Singapore's urban landscape. In 1961 for example, the Proposed Industrialisation Programme by the United Nations, led by the late advisor Professor A. Winsemius, helped identify industrialisation as a key strategy for creating employment opportunities. Land was set

aside for ports, industrial estates and transport networks. Erik Lorange, a UN Town Planning Advisor, also reviewed Singapore's 1958 master plan, and his recommendations paved the way for a major revamp of our urban and town planning policies.

4 Fast-forward to today, Singapore's relationship with the UN has much evolved. In the international arena, Singapore still benefits from the work of our UN colleagues. Habitat III is a case in point. As a major UN global summit, this Conference has been an important platform for small states like Singapore, to join in the conversation with other stakeholders to talk about what we want our global urban landscape to look like 20 years on.

5 However, as much as we have benefitted from the technical assistance and support provided by our international friends, Singapore is also eager to continue learning, and sharing what we have learned, with others. At Habitat III, Singapore contributed to the dialogue through sharing the lessons distilled from our development experience. We stressed the importance of practicing long-term integrated planning and dynamic urban governance, in order for cities to achieve sustainable and liveable cities for their citizens.

6 Beyond Habitat III, another way of sharing our developmental experience is through the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). Established in 1992, it is the primary platform through which Singapore offers technical assistance to other countries. Since its inception, over 108,000 officials from 170 countries, including 8,600 from Africa, have participated in these SCP programmes. We also organise Conferences such as the World Cities Summit, held every two years in conjunction with the CleanEnviro Summit Singapore and the Singapore International WaterWeek, which altogether serve as international platforms for sharing urban ideas and solutions.

7 In light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Singapore is also providing more technical and targeted support to other developing countries working to achieve the 2030 sustainable development goals. Last year Singapore announced the Sustainable Development Package at the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015. This MOU that we sign today signifies the first step under this Package.

8 The training programme that we will launch under this MOU will involve capacity building programmes on urban issues such as public

housing, water and sanitation, smart nation planning and transport. The first iteration will be a pilot for African cities, and future iterations of the programme may include collaborations with other developing cities. It will begin in Singapore and enable city leaders to gain an insight to Singapore's urban development experience.

9 Singapore enjoys warm relations with Africa and we are keen to promote more regular interactions between the leaders and officials of Singapore and Africa, whether through bilateral visits or meetings on the side-lines of multilateral events. For example, in August this year, Singapore hosted 10 African Ministers as part of the second Sub-Saharan Africa High-Level Ministerial Exchange Visit. There is much we can learn from the regular exchanges and partnerships between our countries and our peoples, and it is our hope that this Training Programme would help institutionalise and entrench Singapore's engagements with our friends from Africa.

10 At the same time, we would like to take this opportunity to launch a specially-commissioned Habitat III Publication on Partnerships. This publication was prepared by the Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC). The Centre was set up in 2008 by the Ministry of National Development (MND) and the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) with the mission to distil, create and share knowledge on liveable and sustainable cities.

11 The publication looks at how innovative partnership models can boost a city's competitiveness, sustainability and liveability through a series of case studies. It begins with Singapore's experience in consolidating all aspects of water management under a single entity, in order to bridge traditional governmental and disciplinary siloes. It also highlights a successful 10-year regeneration partnership between the local government and the private sector in North East Lincolnshire, United Kingdom. Finally, it examines how public utilities, a local bank, and the community came together to establish a Carbon Bank system in Gwangju, Republic of Korea, in their efforts against climate change.

12 In conclusion, I would like to end by saying that Singapore is honoured to make our small contribution in making the world a better place to live in for more people.

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