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**REMARKS BY MR CALVIN PHUA, DEPUTY SECRETARY (INTERNATIONAL), AT THE COCKTAIL RECEPTION ON THE OCCASION OF LOT POLISH AIRLINES ENTERING THE SINGAPORE MARKET, 11 DECEMBER 2017, MONDAY 4.00PM AT SO SOFITEL SINGAPORE**

His Excellency Zenon Kosiniak-Kamysz, Ambassador of Poland to Singapore

Mr Rafał Milczarski, LOT Airlines CEO & President of the Management Board

Mr Robert Andrzejczyk, President of the Polish Tourism Organisation

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good afternoon to all of you. I am very happy to join you today to celebrate the launch of LOT Polish Airlines' service between Warsaw and Singapore.

2. This is a significant and exciting milestone. LOT is returning to Singapore after 22 years<sup>1</sup>, and this will be the first time Poland and Singapore are linked by a direct service.

3. With LOT's new service, passengers from Singapore can tap into LOT's strong network at Warsaw Chopin Airport to connect to other Polish cities as well as Central and Eastern European destinations. Passengers from Poland can access 47 destinations across South-East Asia and South-West Pacific through Changi Airport.

4. The new service will extend and deepen the bilateral ties. It will open up opportunities for business and leisure travel, and promote trade, tourism, and investment between Poland and Singapore. Last year, our bilateral trade reached more than USD 700 million<sup>2</sup>, double that a decade ago. With this new service, and with the opening of the first South-East Asian Trade Office by the Polish Investment and Trade Agency in Singapore last December, this will grow.

5. LOT's new service is made possible in part by the liberal air transport policies of Poland and Singapore, which has helped to build Warsaw and Singapore into key aviation hubs in their respective regions. In Singapore, we have adopted an open skies policy, and have concluded Air Services Agreements with some 140 States and Territories, of which more than 60 are Open Skies Agreements. This has enabled the aviation industry to play a key role in Singapore's economy, contributing 6% of our GDP and providing more than 160,000 jobs.

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<sup>1</sup> LOT served Singapore through various one- and two-stop routings between 1988 and 1995, including a Warsaw-Bangkok-Singapore service between 1992 and 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Actual figure SGD 962 million. Source: Straits Times (23 May 2017). Singapore, Poland Inks Pacts to Boost Economic Ties.

6. Beyond Poland and Singapore, air travel between South-East Asia and Eastern Europe has been growing rapidly, with passenger traffic doubling over the past 5 years. We should support this growing market.

7. That is why ASEAN and the EU are currently negotiating a Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (CATA) that will build upon the existing bilateral agreements and further liberalise air transport between and beyond the two regions. This region-to-region agreement will strengthen air connectivity, spur the growth of air travel, and promote trade, tourism, and investment between ASEAN and the EU. For LOT and other Polish businesses, the CATA will open up new opportunities, in Singapore and in the other ASEAN countries.

8. Once again, I congratulate LOT Polish Airlines on its new direct service between Warsaw and Singapore. I thank everyone who has worked hard to make this possible, and look forward to the arrival of the inaugural flight in May 2018.

9. Thank you.

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