

## JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

# MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE STRENGTHEN BILATERAL COOPERATION AND REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TOWARDS ISKANDAR MALAYSIA'S DEVELOPMENT

*13th Meeting of the Malaysia-Singapore Joint Ministerial Committee for Iskandar Malaysia Looks Forward to Signing of RTS Link Bilateral Agreement by December 2017*

***Iskandar Puteri, Johor Bahru, 31 July 2017***

1. The Malaysia-Singapore Joint Ministerial Committee for Iskandar Malaysia (JMCIM) held its thirteenth meeting in Iskandar Puteri, Johor Bahru. The meeting was co-chaired by YB Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Dahlan, Malaysia's Minister in the Prime Minister's Department and H.E. Minister Khaw Boon Wan, Singapore's Coordinating Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Transport. Also present were the Menteri Besar of Johor, YAB Dato' Mohamed Khaled Nordin and Singapore's Minister for National Development, H.E. Minister Lawrence Wong. Senior officials from both countries were also present.

2. At the meeting, Singapore and Malaysia reaffirmed the progress of Iskandar Malaysia and reiterated their commitment to its continued development. The JMCIM noted the substantive progress achieved by the High Speed Rail (HSR) Work Group in the planning of the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore HSR project since its formation in December 2013. With the signing of the HSR Bilateral Agreement by the respective Ministers on 13 December 2016, the work of the HSR Work Group has officially been completed. A HSR Bilateral Committee (HSR BC), led by senior government officials from both countries, has since been formed to oversee matters that may affect the international services and all other matters detailed in the Bilateral Agreement. The JMCIM welcomed the recent conclusion of an Industry Briefing where interested parties were engaged on the indicative tender parameters and procurement approach for the upcoming HSR Assets Company (AssetsCo) tender. They noted that the recently concluded Industry Briefing was well received, signalling continued strong interest from the market on the project, and looked forward to the calling of the AssetsCo tender by the end of the year.

3. The Transportation Links Work Group (TLWG) continues to work towards strengthening transport connectivity between Malaysia and Singapore. On the Johor Bahru-Singapore Rapid Transit System (RTS) Link, the JMCIM welcomed the good progress of commercial, technical and regulatory discussions and looked forward to

the signing of a Bilateral Agreement on the RTS Link by December 2017. The JMCIM agreed that the RTS Link would greatly improve transport connectivity between Johor and Singapore. It would have the ability to carry up to 10,000 passengers per direction per hour. Both Governments agreed that the RTS Link would commence passenger service by 31 December 2024, after which the KTMB Tebrau shuttle would cease operations.

4. The JMCIM noted that both Governments have agreed on the key commercial arrangements for the RTS Link. In particular, each Government will appoint an Infrastructure Company (InfraCo) to fund, build, own, maintain, and upgrade the civil infrastructure and stations within their own countries. Both Governments will jointly appoint an operating company (OpCo) to design, build, finance, operate, maintain and renew the RTS Link operating assets (e.g. trains, tracks, systems). For the first concession period, the OpCo will be directly appointed. To encourage bilateral participation, a Joint Venture between a Malaysian entity and a Singaporean entity is preferred. The JMCIM welcomed the update that experienced local metro operators, Prasarana Malaysia Berhad and SMRT Corporation Ltd, are currently exploring the formation of a Joint Venture (JV) company to be the RTS Link Op Co.

5. The JMCIM noted that traffic at the Causeway was growing, and more could be done to manage congestion. The JMCIM thus welcomed the news that the KTMB Tebrau shuttle had increased its initial 14 daily trips in 2015 to 26 daily trips (as of 1 June 2017) to cope with the travel demand. Both countries are working towards further increasing the number of train services. In March 2017, Singapore had announced plans to upgrade Woodlands Checkpoint to increase overall clearance capacity and ease congestion, while enhancing security outcomes.

6. The JMCIM noted that the Industrial Cooperation Work Group (ICWG) has been progressing well in its collaboration in the areas of Advanced Materials Engineering (AME), Electronics and Food and Talent Development. For AME, the ICWG is looking for new opportunities to collaborate in the aerospace and med-tech sectors. The ICWG has also embarked on creating a directory of Malaysian Engineering Support industries and companies to facilitate collaboration between both countries. For Electronics, the ICWG is exploring leveraging regional and international platforms to promote industry collaboration between both countries. On Food, the ICWG has been working on sharing food innovation capabilities between the two countries and engaging companies that are interested to expand into Malaysia. On Talent Development, the JMCIM also welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ITE Education Services Singapore and the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) on 16 March 2017 which marked the launch of a Capacity Development Programme for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Master Trainers. The S\$203,000 programme funded

by Temasek Foundation International has provided training to 24 TVET Master Trainers from seven institutions in Johor, who in turn will train other TVET trainers.

7. The Immigration Work Group (IWG) has continued to make progress in terms of facilitating cross-border movement of people and goods. The JMCIM noted that more than 676,000 applications have been approved for the Malaysian Automated Clearance System (MACS) as at 30 June 2017. Since January 2017, the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority's (ICA) BIKES II, which allows simultaneous automated self-immigration clearance of both motorcyclists and pillion riders, has been fully implemented, with a combined total of 164 counters at Woodlands and Tuas Checkpoints. The Malaysia Citizen Motorcyclist (M-BIKE), which similarly allows registered motorcyclists and their registered pillion passengers to clear immigration concurrently at dedicated M-BIKE lanes, has been implemented at all 100 lanes in Bangunan Sultan Iskandar (Causeway) and 50 lanes in Kompleks Sultan Abu Bakar (Second Link). As at 15 July 2017, 128,145 users have registered with M-BIKE.

8. The JMCIM noted the progress made by the Iconic Project Work Group (IPWG) and made a site visit to Afiniti Medini, which was completed in December 2015. Its residential units commenced handover to buyers in May 2016. The corporate training centre anchored by CIMB Leadership Academy and the serviced apartments have also been launched while the wellness centre is expected to start operating by end-2017. For Avira, the first phase of terrace homes comprising 208 units have commenced handover to buyers in July 2016.

9. The Tourism Work Group (TWG) continues to work closely on capability development and joint promotion of the twinning initiative for Sungei Buloh and Pulau Kukup. The JMCIM welcomed the upcoming signing of a MoU between National Parks Board (NParks) of Singapore and the Johor National Parks Corporation (JNPC) to establish Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and Pulau Kukup Ramsar as 'Sister Wetlands'. As part of a '2-year Tourism Strategic Roadmap', the TWG will also be launching a joint programme by Q4 2017 to attract more visitors to both nature sites.

10. The JMCIM noted that the Environment Work Group (EWG) has continued to make good progress in environmental cooperation through knowledge sharing and capacity building. Through capacity building workshops in the areas of air quality management, waste and resource management, and environmental education over the last two years, participants from both countries were able to exchange technical expertise and share experiences in leveraging technology to protect the environment. The EWG will continue to collaborate through further capacity building programmes in energy efficiency, environmental monitoring, water demand management, low carbon cities, environmental education in schools, management of food waste, and technologies for enforcement and surveillance.

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