

Commission on Science and Technology for Development 17th Session, 12 - 16 May 2014

Presentation of reports on science, technology and innovation policy reviews

15 May 2014

**Statement by Ms. Tan Yee Woan, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Singapore,
Geneva**

**SINGAPORE STATEMENT AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY REVIEW
OF OMAN DURING THE 16TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT ON 15 MAY
2014**

Mr Chairman

1 Singapore welcomes the Omani delegation led by His Excellency Dr Hilal Al Hinai, Secretary General of The Research Council and thanks Oman for its insightful presentation. Singapore is honoured to participate in the review of Oman's science, technology and innovation (STI) policy at this session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD).

Oman's firm basis for STI development

2 Oman has a firm basis to enhance its economy to the next stage of development. As pointed out in the STI report, Oman enjoys, inter alia, political and social stability and effective political, administrative and judicial institutions. Oman has a high level of gross tertiary enrolments which is above the GCC average. In addition, the UN Human Development Report in 2010 lauded the country for making the most strides in the past 40 years, particularly in the area of education.

3 The Omani government's long term strategic planning approach towards diversifying the economy is also commendable. We note in particular the development and use of Five Year Plans which are aimed to achieve Oman's Vision 2020 in operational terms for various economic sectors and social issues. We further note that Oman has already embarked on developing its Vision 2040.

4 The creation of The Research Council (TRC) in 2005, as the key body for STI policy provides a good platform from which further STI initiatives can be developed in a coordinated manner. An example of one such venture is the establishment of the Industrial Innovation Centre, which was funded jointly and established by TRC, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and other stakeholders. These initiatives have the potential to further stimulate a culture of innovation in Omani industry.

Singapore's STI experience

5 Like Oman, Singapore realises that we must shift to achieving growth by expanding labour productivity rather than by expanding the size of the labour force. R&D is a source of innovation and value creation. This realisation drives Singapore's emphasis to strengthen innovation and the commercialisation of R&D.

6 Singapore's major drive to transform into a knowledge-based economy began in the 1990s. Our first 5-year National Technology Plan was developed in 1991. It established the National Science and Technology Board to catalyse the development of technology. Thereafter, we have had a number of successive Science and Technology Plans.

7 Singapore's Research, Innovation and Enterprise Council (RIEC) is a public and private sector council chaired by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. It leads Singapore's national drive to promote research and enterprise, and advises the Singapore Cabinet on national research and innovation policies. Singapore's National Research Foundation (NRF) supports the work of the RIEC. NRF is similar to Oman's TRC, in that its role is to develop and coordinate national policies to grow national R&D capabilities. Our current research priorities are in the areas of electronics, biomedical sciences, infocomm and media, engineering and clean technology.

8 Singapore's Research, Innovation and Enterprise (RIE) 2015 plan has six key thrusts. First, there will be continued emphasis on basic science and knowledge as the basis for future innovations. Second, we will continue to focus on talent attraction and development. Third, there will be greater emphasis on competitive funding as a means to select the best ideas. Fourth, greater synergies between researchers across the public and private sectors will be fostered. Fifth, a greater proportion of R&D will be focused on economic outcomes. Sixth, we will strengthen support for commercialisation so as to spur the development of new products and services for economic and societal benefit.

Cooperation between Singapore and Oman in STI

9 Singapore and Oman share the view that ICT is a key enabler for many economic and social sectors, for example, for education and the upgrading of human capital. Relations between Singapore's Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) and Oman's Information Technology Authority (ITA) are excellent. IDA is collaborating with ITA to support

Oman's 8th 5-year development plan for a knowledge-based economy. The areas of cooperation include knowledge sharing and information exchange on strategies to develop industry, manpower and SMEs in the ICT sector. The courses conducted under the Singapore Cooperation Programme on subjects such as strategic IT planning, effective management of ICT projects and training of Chief Information Officers have received favourable feedback from the Omani officials who had attended.

10 Singapore remains committed to building upon the existing cooperation and growing our "Enhanced Partnership" with Oman.

11 We wish Oman the very best in its efforts to develop its National Strategy for Innovation.

Thank you.

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