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General Debate

Statement by High Commissioner to Kenya and Special Envoy of the Minister for
Foreign Affairs of Singapore

Tuesday, 19 July 2016

Speaker: H.E. Yatiman Bin Yusof

*Not checked against delivery**

* This statement is made available in the language and form in which it was received. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.

**NATIONAL STATEMENT PRESENTED BY
SINGAPORE'S HIGH COMMISSIONER TO KENYA AND
SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HE YATIMAN BIN YUSOF**

**GENERAL DEBATE AT UNCTAD XIV,
TUESDAY, 19 JULY 2016**

Mr President,

Excellencies,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

1 I would like to begin by thanking the government and people of Kenya for your generosity and excellent and gracious hospitality for hosting the UNCTAD 14.

2 2015 was a landmark year. We witnessed the completion of four major international agreements. These agreements symbolise the international community's commitment to sustainable growth and development. We need to go beyond rhetoric and work towards implementation. UNCTAD has an important role to play in this regard. Singapore therefore welcomes the focus of this year's Conference on moving from decisions to actions.

Mr President,

3 Singapore is a small island developing state (SIDS). Our land is only 700 square kilometres. We are also a young country. Therefore, we may not have all the answers to the development challenges facing other countries. Nonetheless, I would like to share some of the lessons from our own development journey.

4 First, sustainable development as the core of our development philosophy. Singapore faces many of the same natural vulnerabilities that other small island developing states face such as resource scarcity and the lack of a natural hinterland. These vulnerabilities forced us to take pragmatic decisions to

pursue sustainable development from the outset to ensure our long-term survival. We pursued policies that allow us to be energy and water-efficient and to reduce carbon emissions, waste and pollution. We know that we cannot afford to engage in an all-out pursuit of economic growth at the expense of our living environment.

5 Second, we benefited from effective international partnerships in our development journey, including the technical assistance and cooperation provided by the World Bank and UN agencies. For example, the UNDP sent a Dutch economist, Dr Albert Winsemius, to advise on our development policies in our early years. Our founding Ministers worked closely with Dr Winsemius and his advice proved to be invaluable in our development journey.

6 Third, we hope to share our experience with other countries through the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). Since 1992, we have trained 7,000 officials from our fellow developing countries each year. We have now trained more than 100,000 officials. Given that we are here in Africa, I wish to reiterate Singapore's commitment to supporting Africa's long-term development plans. More than 8,500 African officials have attended our SCP courses, ranging from public administration and governance to air and sea port management. Kenya alone has sent over 400 officials for our SCP courses. We hope that our SCP courses have proven useful to the participants and we welcome more of our friends to attend.

7 Likewise, we support UNCTAD and its important work in promoting sustainable growth and development. We are honoured to have hosted three editions of UNCTAD's biennial flagship course on "Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda" for developing countries in the Asia-Pacific. We look forward to hosting two more sessions in 2017 and 2019.

8 With sustainable development taking centre stage internationally, Singapore is also doing our part by rolling out Sustainable Development and Climate Change programmes with courses on energy efficiency, environmental management and climate change adaptation strategies. In addition, we teamed up with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) in 2015 to conduct a

specialised training course to strengthen the capacity of small island developing states and other countries. We are also partnering the Singapore-based UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence to conduct leadership programmes on sustainable development and good governance.

Mr President,

9 Individual efforts by countries to achieve sustainable development can help to better safeguard our global commons and mitigate the adverse impact of development such as pollution and climate change. Singapore looks forward to working with our friends, both here in Africa as well as internationally, as we work towards building the world we want.

10 Thank you.

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