

Singapore's National Statement by Ambassador-at-Large Chew Tai Soo on REDD+ Partnership at the Aichi-Nagoya Ministerial Meeting in Nagoya, Japan, 26 October 2010

Minister Maehara
Minister Abal
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

Singapore is honoured to be participating in the Ministerial meeting of the REDD+ Partnership, and would like to thank the government of Japan for hosting this meeting.

As a small low-lying island state, Singapore has strong interests in the success of the global effort to address climate change. Singapore fully recognises the importance of addressing deforestation which accounts for approximately 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions. In this regard, Singapore had strongly supported the inclusion of REDD+ in the Bali Action Plan in 2007, and has also supported and actively participated in the REDD+ Partnership since its inception at the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference in May this year.

Singapore is also deeply concerned about the other impacts of uncontrolled deforestation on the environment such as biodiversity and air pollution. In Southeast Asia, forest and peatland fires caused by unsustainable land clearing practices have resulted in frequent occurrence of transboundary haze. This has affected public health, tourism, transportation and the economies of affected countries. In fact, the Pollutant Standards Index (PSI), a measurement of ambient air quality, plummeted into the unhealthy range in large parts of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore last week as a result of transboundary haze from forest fires. Regional cooperation to overcome this problem has shown some benefits in the past and should be stepped up.

Singapore takes the issue of uncontrolled deforestation seriously. We are therefore pleased that the Partnership's principle of inclusiveness enables low-forest, low-deforestation countries like Singapore to contribute to REDD+ efforts, by means other than providing finance or providing forest projects. One of these means is capacity building. Singapore, which is neither a recipient country nor a donor country, has a record of co-operation within a South-South framework with other developing countries. In the area of forestry, Singapore has collaborated with ASEAN countries on sustainable forest management and biodiversity. It is therefore encouraging to note that the promotion of South-South co-operation has been reflected in the work programme for 2011 – 2012.

The REDD+ Partnership was established as a platform for countries to advance concrete initiatives on REDD+, until such time as a REDD+ mechanism under the UNFCCC is established. By dint of its purpose, the dynamics of the REDD+ Partnership are therefore different from that of the UNFCCC negotiations. The Partnership is and should remain a non-politicised space for concrete work to be done on REDD+. Partners should fully utilise the opportunity provided by the REDD+ Partnership to make progress on promising initiatives such as the REDD+ database of projects and financial assistance. Singapore is encouraged to see that the Partnership has indeed made good progress on the REDD+ database as well as the establishment of its website and encourages Partners to remain focused on this goal of taking forward concrete initiatives. Since time is not our side, we urge Partners to work expeditiously and to adopt a pragmatic approach, in completing the tasks of the Partnership including tasks approved under the Work Programme Phase 1 till the end of 2010, and finalisation of medium-term actions to be delivered under Phase

2 from 2011 to 2012.

Finally, we must keep in mind our ultimate objective, which is to achieve an agreement on REDD+, under the UNFCCC framework. In this regard, the Partnership could help advance efforts at reaching such an agreement in the negotiations by having a unified voice during negotiations, and emphasising, through working examples of REDD+, the national and global benefits that can be derived.

Thank you.