

Speech by Deputy Prime Minister, Coordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Teo Chee Hean, on Climate Change at the Committee of Supply Debate, 7 March 2013

Associate Professor Fatimah Lateef asked if we are on target to meet our climate change pledges and if we are considering any form of carbon pricing.

Reducing Emissions

Singapore aspires to be a climate-resilient global city that is well positioned for green growth. And we are on track to meet our pledge of 7-11% below business-as-usual (BAU) levels by 2020. We are prepared to go further and reduce our emissions by 16% from the 2020 business-as-usual level, if there is a global agreement on climate change. This would require a major effort given Singapore's early mitigation actions and difficulties to switch to alternative forms of clean energy.

This year, a number of new measures have or will come into force, to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. Building owners have to step up efforts to improve energy efficiency under the Building Control Act. The Energy Conservation Act will stipulate energy management practices for large energy users. We are also encouraging the take-up of low-emission cars and taxis, through the Carbon Emissions-based Vehicle Scheme.

We are studying a comprehensive suite of measures to reduce emissions, including carbon pricing. Carbon pricing will send the appropriate price signals to encourage changes in energy consumption, lower carbon emissions, and promote low-carbon technology. However, the implications for both businesses and consumers must be studied carefully, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. Countries such as Australia and South Korea have recently announced carbon pricing schemes, and we will study their experiences.

The Government has formed the Long Term Emissions and Mitigation Working Group under the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Climate Change to study how we can stabilise our emissions over the long term. We need to work on energy efficiency improvements, explore new energy options, and identify new technologies for deployment. We collaborate closely with our universities and research institutes to conduct R&D in areas such as solar energy, smart grid and green building technologies that meet our local needs and conditions.

Adaptation

Associate Professor Fatimah Lateef has also asked about strategies to address sea level rises. The Resilience Working Group under the IMCCC is working to enhance Singapore's resilience to climate change. Protecting our coastline, addressing increased flood risks, and assessing implications of warmer temperatures on public health are some key aspects of its work. For example, we have raised the minimum reclamation level for new reclamation projects by an additional one metre (beyond the previous 1.25m) since the end of 2011 to cater to a possible rise in sea levels.

The Minister for Environment and Water Resources will elaborate more in his speech during COS on how Singapore is preparing for, and building capabilities to, address climate change.