

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR STANLEY LOH, PERMANENT
SECRETARY FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT, AT
THE VIRTUAL LAUNCH OF THE 3RD SOUTHEAST ASIA CLIMATE
OUTLOOK SURVEY REPORT ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Mr Choi Shing Kwok, CEO and Director of ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting me to join you today. I would like to congratulate the ISEAS Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme for completing its third Southeast Asia Climate Outlook Survey Report.

2. Understanding is the key first step to addressing any problem. This report provides a useful update on the attitudes and perceptions of the people in various Southeast Asian countries towards climate change issues. Last year's report found that the vast majority of respondents recognised the importance of climate change, with 7 in 10 viewing it as a serious and immediate threat. This sobering sentiment is justified, as demonstrated by recent weather developments and predicted by science.

3. Just last month, South Korea and Pakistan experienced unprecedented rainfall and floods. One-third of Pakistan was completely underwater. Pakistan's Minister for Climate Change called the disaster "apocalyptic". Meanwhile, China experienced a historic heatwave that dried up the Jialing River, allowing people to walk across the riverbed of a once gushing river. Earlier this year, India faced the highest

temperatures on record for over a century, which affected its wheat yield and led to the subsequent imposition of an export ban.

4. The science is clear. Last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change highlighted that every region in the world was projected to witness stronger and longer heat waves, unprecedented droughts and floods, and accelerating sea-level rise and storm surges. This same report assessed that Southeast Asia would be among the hardest hit regions. As such, for Southeast Asia, it is not a question of if, but when, how severe, and what we can and are doing about it.

5. We must act now and shore up our defences while we can. Climate change is a global challenge that requires both national action and a global response. It calls for participation and partnerships at all levels, particularly regional partnerships among ASEAN countries.

6. Singapore recognises the importance of regional cooperation on climate action.

- Since 2018, we have partnered and supported fellow developing countries in the region to enhance climate action and implement their Paris Agreement commitments through the Climate Action Package, or CAP, under the Singapore Cooperation Programme. Under the Singapore Cooperation Programme and its CAP, we have trained more than 137,000 officials from over 180 countries and territories in topics such as climate adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk management, and green finance. Later this month, we will be collaborating with ISEAS to organise a workshop for officials from ASEAN Member States on decarbonisation pathways.

Equipped with the right skills, we hope that officials can help lead their countries' sustainable and climate-resilient development.

- Singapore also hosts the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre, or ASMC, which builds regional capacity and provides important meteorological services. It also strengthens the region's resilience to climate change through monitoring and early warning of transboundary smoke haze from land and forest fires in the region. Between 2018 and 2022, we have committed 5 million Singapore dollars to the ASMC to build up capabilities in weather and climate prediction.
- Beyond our shores, Singapore is working to establish risk transfer tools to strengthen the financial and societal resilience of vulnerable communities and countries in our region in times of crises. The Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility, or SEADRIF, was established with the support of Japan and the World Bank, to provide ex-ante climate and disaster risk financing solutions for ASEAN countries. SEADRIF launched its first product in February 2021, a sovereign flood insurance solution that provides cover against flood risks in Laos. SEADRIF is in the midst of conceptualising its second product, which is a Public Asset Financial Protection Programme that allows SEADRIF member countries in the region to better manage the financial risk from damage to public assets and infrastructure.
- Singapore is also affirming and strengthening our partnerships with other ASEAN countries. In March this year, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Indonesia on bilateral

cooperation in climate change and sustainability. Last month, we concluded a revised MoU with Brunei on bilateral cooperation in environmental affairs and climate change, and Frameworks of Cooperation with Malaysia in digital and green economies. These partnerships enable our countries to collaborate on win-win opportunities that support both climate and economic objectives. Singapore will continue to seek further collaborations with others in ASEAN so that we can decarbonise and better weather the impact of climate change together.

7. Climate change will drastically change the way we live and operate. While urgent decarbonisation is needed, we must also recognise that the transition to net zero will affect the livelihoods of many. Domestically, we must also partner our people, communities, and businesses to manage this transition.

- Last year, Singapore launched the Singapore Green Plan 2030 to mobilise and empower the public, private and people sectors to co-create solutions for sustainability as part of a continuous national engagement process.
- The Green Plan sets out a whole-of-nation sustainability road map to advance towards a low-carbon future, through ambitious and concrete sectorial targets. It has 5 pillars – City in Nature, Energy Reset, Sustainable Living, Green Economy and Resilient Future.
- Singapore is working hard towards these targets. For example, under the Energy Reset Pillar, we developed one of the world’s largest inland floating solar farms on a reservoir last year. We also

aim to build 60,000 electric vehicle charging points by 2030 to encourage EV adoption. To address the threat of rising sea levels, we are developing options to protect our coastline, combining engineering solutions with nature-based elements, such as the planting of mangroves and seagrasses.

- This year, we are taking it one step further with the Forward Singapore exercise to engage a wide spectrum of Singaporeans in order to reach consensus on our social compact, including the roles and responsibilities of various segments of society in stewarding environmental sustainability.

8. I thank ISEAS for the work on the Southeast Asia Climate Outlook Survey Report. I look forward to studying the latest report. I am sure it will provide useful insights to policymakers, business leaders, community leaders and the people of Southeast Asia in our push towards a more sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient future.

Thank you.