

Closing Remarks

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Distinguished delegates from Asian countries, experts, and participants

Good evening.

We have come to the end of our plenary sessions for the 3rd Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum. It is a great honor for me to make these closing remarks at this important EST Forum.

I would also wish to extend my special thanks to Mr. Onogawa, Director of UNCRD, and the Ministry of Environment Japan Mr. Shiraishi for allowing us this opportunity to organize the 3rd Forum here in Singapore. We are delighted to do this, and to be able to welcome all the delegates, experts and participants to the Forum and to Singapore. And, as the Forum has successfully expanded, I am also pleased to have with us new delegates from the 8 South Asian countries as well.

I hope that everyone has had a fruitful exchange of views and ideas for the past two days that, I am sure, will help us in one way or other to promote environmentally sustainable transport in our countries.

For us in Singapore, this forum is especially timely, as we have just done our Land Transport Review early this year for sustainable land transport development into the future. Together with the publication of the National Energy Policy Report, National Climate Change Strategy Report, we have strived to adopt a holistic and long term approach on EST.

Singapore places great emphasis in promoting an environmentally sustainable transport system. A key pillar of our land transport strategy has been to develop our public transport to carry the majority of travel, and our aim is to further increase our public transport modal share. We have thus committed to invest substantially in expanding our Rapid Transit System, and to implement policies and initiatives to improve bus travel, the aim being to make our public transport system more accessible to all, convenient to use, with shortened journey times such that it is a viable alternative to travel by car.

On the other complementary side, Travel Demand Management, we were one of the first cities to introduce congestion pricing to manage congestion. Together with our VQS (Vehicle Quota System), we have managed to keep traffic flowing generally smoothly on our roads. Moving ahead with the challenge of increased demand for travel growing population, we will continue to use what is sometimes referred to as push-pull factors to maintain sustainable mobility in Singapore.

Our overall aim is to secure a high quality living environment for our people now, and into the future. We are committed to adopting environmentally sustainable practices in the planning and development of our transport infrastructures.

Climate change issue has received much attention in the recent years. We hope to do our part to mitigate global warming by achieving improvements in the energy consumption for the transport sector. Initiatives such as Green Vehicle Rebates and mandatory fuel labeling scheme are in place to promote the use of cleaner and more fuel efficient vehicles.

Our transport system must also be one that ensures full accessibility to cater to the needs of the elderly, physically challenged and family with young children. With that in mind, we will embark on international best practices, such as implementing barrier-free routes within vicinity of all train stations by 2010, among other measures.

Last but not least, we should not neglect non-motorized transport, as mentioned by numerous presenters, such as cycling and walking through provision of appropriate facilities and enhance road safety through raising awareness and improving safety feature of our roads.

Singapore promotes sustainable development with the highest level of commitment from the government. The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development has been formed with the objective of developing a national framework for Singapore to achieve a sustainable high quality living environment.

As with other countries, Singapore will continue to face the challenge of providing a sustainable high quality living environment for our people, our families and our children. We are happy to learn from the experiences of other countries and the experts in the forum how we can continually improve our strategies into the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I hope the presentations and discussions over the past two days have enable us to draw lessons and experiences from one another that we can all take back with us. I thank you for coming to Singapore and hope you have a pleasant stay here.