

STATEMENT BY SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT DR AMY KHOR AT THE LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE ON “STRENGTHENING ACTIONS ON NATURE TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC”, 4th AP FORUM MINISTERIAL SEGMENT, 7 OCTOBER 2021, SUWON CITY, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Excellencies and distinguished delegates

1 The Asia-Pacific region holds 20% of the world’s biodiversity. However, many species are at risk due to ecosystem degradation. The challenges of biodiversity loss, compounded by ongoing crises such as pollution, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic, threaten to reverse the region’s hard-earned progress on the SDGs.

A City in Nature

2 The role of nature in sustainable development cannot be overstated. As a densely populated city-state, Singapore is cognisant of the need to continue greening our urban environment and finding innovative ways to weave nature into our urban fabric. And even as we face developmental pressures, Singapore is committed to protect ecologically important areas.

3 Earlier this year, we launched the Singapore Green Plan 2030, which charts a Whole-of-Nation roadmap for sustainable development. One of the key pillars of the Green Plan is to transform Singapore into a City in Nature. To create a green, liveable and sustainable home for Singaporeans, we are

making our urban spaces greener by planting one million more trees and providing 200 hectares of new nature parks by 2030. By expanding our Park Connector Network, every household will be within a 10-minute walk from a park. We will also continue conserving Singapore's rich biodiversity through habitat restoration and species recovery programmes.

4 Singapore is also taking action to safeguard our coastal and marine environment. Although our intertidal and sub-tidal reef areas are just over 12 square kilometres, they are home to over 250 hard coral species, 200 species of sponges, and more. Working with research partners, we have initiated marine species recovery programmes such as for marine turtles and several locally rare coral species. We have also developed an Integrated Urban Coastal Management framework, which seeks to optimise coastal resources and conservation of marine biodiversity in an urban context. To tackle marine litter, Singapore also has in place a comprehensive waste management system to collect, manage and dispose waste, to prevent litter from leaking into oceans.

Closing

5 We have come a long way in our collective sustainable development journey. In the next critical decade, we must build on progress made, and advance on actions on nature and sustainable development. We need to continue to take urgent climate action as nature will not wait for us to resolve the COVID-19 pandemic before turning our attention to climate change.

6 Thank you.