

*Prime Minister  
Singapore*

9 April 2009

**Mr Mah Bow Tan**

Minister for National Development

Co-Chairman, Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development

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Minister for the Environment and Water Resources

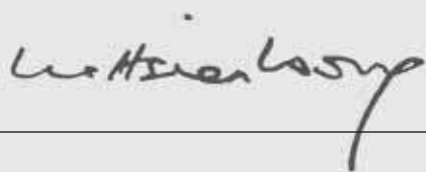
Co-Chairman, Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development

## **REPORT OF THE INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

1. Thank you for your letter of 8 April 2009, submitting the report of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on sustainable development.
2. Sustainable development means achieving the twin goals of growing the economy and protecting the environment, in a balanced way. Singapore has practised sustainable development even before the term was coined. We pursue growth in order to have the means to improve our lives. We also safeguard our living and natural environment, because we do not want our material well-being to come at the expense of our public health or overall quality of life.
3. Singapore is a small island with finite space, limited water supplies and no natural resources. Yet, we have overcome our constraints, grown and developed into a modern city. Through imaginative city design, careful planning and judicious land use, we have housed close to five million people in a clean and green city, with one of the best urban environments in the world.
4. We must build on this to do even better, and preserve our high quality of life for our children.
5. This is a challenging goal. As our economy and population continue growing, our city will become denser. As Asian economies take off, they will consume and demand more energy and raw materials, and push up their prices worldwide. From a global perspective, Singapore's needs are very small. But we still need to secure our access to resources and do our best to conserve energy and water. This is especially so as Singapore has few alternatives to fossil fuels. Climate change is a serious long-term problem for mankind. As a responsible member

of the international community, we must do our part in global efforts to address climate change and reduce greenhouse emissions.

6. Sustainable development demands long term attention and effort. Some measures will incur disproportionate costs and impair our competitiveness. We have to adopt a pragmatic approach, find the most cost-effective solutions and pace the implementation appropriately so that we do not hurt our economy. We should also invest in capability building and R&D, to take advantage of new technologies that facilitate sustainable development. Your Committee has developed a blueprint to guide our efforts. It will not be the last word on these issues, but it will take us a significant step forward.
7. This issue concerns not just one or two ministries, but the whole country. Hence we will tackle it using a whole-of-government approach. The people and private sectors also have to work with the public service on this important venture.
8. I thank all your Committee members, as well as the many organisations and individuals who contributed to the report. I am encouraged that so many came forward with their ideas and suggestions. It shows that Singaporeans take an active interest in making Singapore a better place to live in. As we continue to remake our nation to become more vibrant and liveable, what matters is not just new hardware and infrastructure of our city, but also the character and spirit of our people. All Singaporeans should play a part in this transformation, and build a Singapore that we can proudly call our home.



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