REMARKS BY MR TEO SER LUCK, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, SINGAPORE, AT THE 14th MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY IN TRANSPORT (MEET), 15 JANUARY 2009, 10.30AM, TOKYO PRINCE HOTEL PARK TOWER, JAPAN

Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning to all and thank you for this opportunity to address the meeting.

Introduction

1. Transport is the foundation of economic and social progress, but at the same time it is also responsible for a sizeable amount of carbon emissions. As the world's population continues to grow, and economies and human societies develop at exponential rates, the need for transport to support this development will continue to place a huge strain on our environment.

2. The key to sustaining this growth is to ensure our developmental needs are met in ways that will not further strain our already fragile environment. We

need to be bold and forward-looking, and to have a "can-do" spirit in our approach towards environmental sustainability. At the same time we have to be pragmatic, to focus on measures that are practical, effective, and will make impactful contributions to achieve a sustainable and mutually reinforcing balance between development and the environment.

3. We are mindful that the transport sector in Singapore accounts for about 19% of greenhouse gas emissions. Over the last few decades, Singapore has implemented several key transport policies that would control emissions.

Managing Congestion

4. Singapore's land constraints mean that there is limited space available to build roads. Therefore, we have had to put in place innovative, but by no means painless, policies to control the usage of these roads to ensure that they remain smooth flowing, and to keep our environment clean from the pollution that results from vehicles stuck in congestion. Congestion is a function of both the size of the vehicle population as well as how often they are used. Hence we have a 2-pronged approach: by regulating the growth of our vehicle population and managing road usage.

Controlling Our Vehicle Population

5. Let me first speak about how we manage our vehicle population through our Vehicle Quota System (VQS), which was introduced in 1990.

6. The VQS pegs the long-term vehicle population growth at a rate that our road network can support. Under the VQS, potential buyers need to bid for a Certificate of Entitlement (COE) which entitles them to own a vehicle for a fixed number of years. The Government controls the rate at which the vehicle population can grow by fixing the supply of certificates to be released annually. This has allowed the Government to reduce the annual vehicle population growth rate from 6% before it was introduced, to 3% today. Going forward, we will be reducing this further to 1.5%.

Managing Road Usage

7. However, congestion is also a factor of vehicle usage. Our first attempts to control congestion started in 1975, when we introduced the Area Licencing Scheme to manage congestion in the city centre. Drivers who wanted to drive into the city had to queue up to purchase a licence, which they had to display on their cars' windscreen when they drove into the city. It was successful in

controlling congestion, but it was labour intensive to enforce, not user-friendly for motorists, and there were constraints in extending the scheme to other places or time periods when congestion built up.

8. Hence in 1998, we implemented Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) as a more efficient and cost-effective solution for managing road usage, to ensure that traffic on our roads remains smooth-flowing. Motorists are charged when they drive through an ERP gantry and this charge varies at different times and locations according to the demand to use the road.

9. ERP aims to keep traffic speeds on a road within an optimal speed range. It is implemented only on roads where travel demand has built up to a point where traffic conditions degenerate quickly into start-stop conditions. It aims to discourage sufficient motorists from using the road so that traffic conditions can return to optimal speeds. This ensures that our road capacity is maximised and traffic remains smooth-flowing.

10. Ensuring a congestion-free road network facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods, and supports our growth. From an environmental perspective, keeping traffic flowing smoothly saves on time and fuel wasted and pollution caused when vehicles are caught in grid-lock.

11. Singapore does not rely solely on managing road usage to control and reduce carbon emissions. We also have a series of initiatives aimed at improving fuel economy and promoting green vehicles.

Improving Fuel Economy

12. The Fuel Economy Labelling Scheme (FELS) was launched in 2003 as a voluntary programme with the aim of providing buyers of passenger cars with fuel economy information at the point of sale.

13. To enhance the effectiveness of FELS, we intend to make fuel economy labelling mandatory for passenger cars and light goods vehicles from 1 April 2009. All automobile retailers will have to display the fuel economy labels of passenger car and light goods vehicles models at the showroom.

Promoting Green Vehicles and Improving Vehicular Emissions

14. Singapore also aims to encourage more motorists to switch to green vehicles which are cleaner and more fuel-efficient. Tax rebates are given to promote the purchase of hybrid and compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles. More stringent emission standards are also adopted to improve the emissions

from vehicles. To reduce particulate matter (PM) emissions, Singapore introduced ultra low sulphur diesel in December 2005 and mandated that from October 2006, all new diesel vehicles must be Euro IV compliant.

Promoting Public Transport

15. However, the most effective way of reducing congestion and pollution while ensuring our developmental needs are met, is to make greater use of public transport. Public transport is the most efficient and sustainable form of motorised transport. At present, our public transport system carries 63 percent of all trips made during the morning peak. We aim to increase this to 70 per cent by 2020.

16. To do this, public transport has to be a choice mode of travel, and not a last resort. Providing a viable alternative mode of transport is key to getting drivers to drive less. To this end, we are making major investments to improve the quality of our public transport system, including doubling our urban rail network by 2020. We are also working in close partnership with our public transport operators to increase rail and bus services to shorten waiting times and improve the comfort of travelling by public transport.

17. But improving public transport is not simply a matter of building more rail lines and buying buses. We need to invest in quality. Can people get to a train station or bus stop quickly and comfortably? Are the connections good? How long is total journey time and waiting time between transfers? How crowded are the buses and trains? Can people get timely and user-friendly travel information? And so on. Everything that is important to the commuter for him to complete his journey needs to be thought through very carefully. This is our approach to improving the attractiveness of our public transport system, to make it a viable alternative to the car. Given Singapore's dense urban environment, the only sustainable way forward is to make a decisive shift towards public transport.

Conclusion

18. Singapore's journey to develop a transport system that will serve our needs and ensure that our living environment remains liveable is a never ending one, as we seek to continually improve on it. I am honoured today to be able to share some of the progress and efforts Singapore has made, and we are happy to be able to learn from what others have done. We look forward to be able to continue to cooperate and learn how we can safeguard our environment. Thank you.