Singapore and Tianjin renew commitment to deepen collaborations in sustainable development, trade and investment, and people-to-people exchanges

MR No.: 092/20
Singapore, Tuesday, 1 December 2020

1. Singapore and Tianjin signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enhance cooperation under the Singapore-Tianjin Economic and Trade Council (STETC). Both sides will focus on deepening cooperation in three priority areas: sustainable and smart development; trade and investment; and people-to-people exchanges. This was signed at the ninth STETC meeting today by the Council’s Co-Chairmen, Minister for National Development and Minister-in-charge of Social Services Integration, Mr Desmond Lee, and Tianjin Mayor Mr Liao Guoxun. Vice Co-Chairmen, Senior Minister of State for Communications and Information & National Development, Ms Sim Ann, Tianjin Binhai New Area Party Secretary Mr Lian Maojun, and Tianjin Vice Mayor Mr Jin Xiangjun were also present at the meeting.

Partnerships in sustainable and smart development

2. As one of the flagship cooperation projects between Singapore and China, the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City (TEC) has made steady progress in its development over the years. It is now home to a growing population of 100,000 residents and a thriving destination for businesses and tourists. The number of registered companies has increased by seven-fold to 9,200 between 2014 and August 2020. TEC will continue to be a key platform to support China’s goal to become carbon neutral by 2060, and promote sustainable development to other cities along the Belt and Road.

3. There are opportunities for Singapore companies specialising in sustainable developments to participate in Tianjin’s green development, through the TEC. Singapore sustainability consultancy firm, Tembusu Asia Consulting, is developing a zero-waste...
masterplan for TEC to introduce Singapore and international best practices for waste management, in line with the sustainability vision of the project. In addition, the formation of the China-Singapore Green Construction Development Alliance, which comprises Singapore and Tianjin companies and institutes from the urban solutions and sustainability sector, aims to export expertise in developing the TEC and the suite of eco-solutions for smart and sustainable developments to more markets within, and beyond China.

4. Minister Lee said, “As Singapore works towards recovery, we need to cooperate with like-minded partners such as Tianjin to create growth opportunities for our companies and our people. We support Tianjin Government’s goal of promoting the replication of Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city’s experiences to other cities in China, to support China’s green development priorities.”

Collaborations in trade and investment

5. Singapore and Tianjin can leverage our positions as key nodes to Southeast Asia and the Jing-Jin-Ji region\(^1\) respectively to further strengthen trade relations. Singapore Customs and the General Administration of Customs of the People’s Republic of China (GACC) are working to strengthen trade facilitation and enhance trade security between both countries. This builds on an earlier initiative where Singapore and China had agreed to enhance bilateral trade processes by facilitating the exchange of electronic Certificates of Origin and Certificates of Non-Manipulation. The electronic exchange has gone live in November 2019. Beyond government collaboration, Singapore port operator PSA has also signed an MOU with the Tianjin Port Group during the STETC meeting to exchange experiences in smart port development and supply chain logistics.

Deepening people-to-people exchanges

6. The council meeting also discussed plans to keep both economies open and to support talent exchanges. Temasek Polytechnic is collaborating with the National Animation Industrial Park and Tianjin Vocational Institute, respectively, to facilitate more exchanges between young talents and professionals in Singapore and Tianjin through internship placements as well as joint projects.

\(^1\) The Jing-Jin-Ji region is also known as Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei.
7. Singapore companies continue to show interest in Tianjin, a municipality with population of more than 15 million, across sectors such as trade and connectivity, infrastructure and healthcare. A total of six MOUs were signed at the meeting.

Annex 1: List of signings at the 9th STETC meeting
Annex 2: Closing speech by Minister Desmond Lee at the 9th STETC meeting
Annex 3: Background information on TEC
Annex 4: Background on Tianjin and Singapore-Tianjin economic relations

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About Enterprise Singapore
Enterprise Singapore is the government agency championing enterprise development. We work with committed companies to build capabilities, innovate and internationalise.

We also support the growth of Singapore as a hub for global trading and startups, and build trust in Singapore’s products and services through quality and standards.


About Singapore–Tianjin Economic and Trade Council
The Singapore-Tianjin Economic and Trade Council (STETC) was established on 25 January 2007, with the objective of promoting broader exchanges and cooperation between the business communities of Tianjin and Singapore. The launch of the STETC was witnessed by Minister for Trade & Industry Lim Hng Kiang and Chinese Vice-Minister of Commerce Ma Xiuhong.

Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for National Development and Minister-in-charge of Social Services Integration, and Mr Liao Guoxun, Tianjin Mayor, are Co-Chairmen of the Council. The Vice Co-Chairmen are Ms Sim Ann, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information and Ministry of National Development, Mr Lian Maojun, Tianjin Binhai New Area Party Secretary, and Mr Jin Xiangjun, Tianjin Vice Mayor. The STETC is formed by leaders, government officials and private sector representatives of Singapore and Tianjin.
List of signings at 9th STETC meeting

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<th>No</th>
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<td><strong>Singapore-Tianjin Economic and Trade Council MOU for Enhanced Cooperation</strong>&lt;br&gt;{新加坡-天津经济贸易理事会深化合作备忘录}</td>
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<td>Minister Desmond Lee – Mayor Liao Guoxun  李智陞部长 – 廖国勋市长</td>
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Renewal and enhancement of cooperation between Singapore and Tianjin, focusing on priority areas of mutual interests, including (i) Sustainable and Smart Development, (ii) Trade and Investment, and (iii) People-to-People Exchanges, to spur development of the Jing-Jin-Ji region and promote collaborations related to the Belt and Road Initiative.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

1. Amtronics Pte Ltd - Green Building Research Institute²  
   Amtronics 集团 – 天津生态城绿色建筑研究院  
   Formation of China-Singapore Green Construction Development Alliance to provide a platform for cooperation between 23 China and Singapore enterprises in the field of green construction, to jointly promote and exchange expertise in green and sustainable development of cities in China and along the Belt and Road.

2. Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City Investment and Development Co., United Overseas Bank (China), OCBC Wing Hang Bank (China), WongPartnership, SBA Stone Forest Corporate Advisory and Beijing Dentons Law Offices  
   中新天津生态城投资开发有限公司，大华银行（中国）有限公司，华侨永亨银行（中国）有限公司，王律师事务所，瀚石林企业咨询（上海）有限公司北京分公司，北京大成（天津）律师事务所  
   Formation of the Tianjin Eco-City International Business Alliance to facilitate networking, collaboration and internationalisation for Singapore and Chinese companies looking to expand into the respective markets.

3. Keppel Land – Tianjin Eco-City Administrative Committee  
   吉宝置业 – 中新天津生态城管理委员会  
   Collaboration to enhance smart operations and municipal management services in the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City.

² The China-Singapore Green Construction Development Alliance comprises 15 Singapore companies (led by Amtronics Pte Ltd) and eight Chinese companies (led by Green Building Research Institute).
|   | PSA International – Tianjin Port (Group) Co., Ltd  
新加坡国际港务集团 - 天津港 (集团) 有限公司  
Strategic partnership on smart port development, supply chain logistics and cooperation along the Belt and Road.  
|   | Temasek Polytechnic – National Animation Industrial Park  
淡马锡理工学院 - 国家动漫园  
Agreement to explore collaborations in internships placement; students and staff exchanges; access to training and consultancy expertise in the areas of innovation and entrepreneurship; and joint industry projects in Information Technology and serious gaming.  
|   | Temasek Polytechnic – Tianjin Vocational Institute  
淡马锡理工学院 - 天津职业大学  
Agreement to explore collaborations in internships placement; students and staff exchanges; access to training and consultancy expertise in the areas of innovation and entrepreneurship; activities related to the exchange of academic knowledge and materials; and projects in areas of mutual interests such as data analytics, Industry 4.0, etc. |
CLOSING SPEECH BY MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER IN CHARGE OF SOCIAL SERVICES INTEGRATION, MR DESMOND LEE AT THE 9TH SINGAPORE-TIANJIN ECONOMIC AND TRADE COUNCIL (STETC)
01 DECEMBER 2020

Opening

1. A very good morning to all of you. It is my pleasure to co-chair the 9th Singapore-Tianjin Economic and Trade Council (STETC) meeting with Mayor Liao today.

2. My visit to Tianjin with DPM Heng last year left a deep impression on me. I had hoped to host and meet Mayor Liao in person this year as it would be the first STETC for the both of us. However, given the current circumstances, we can only meet virtually instead.

3. I will continue my speech in English.

Impact of COVID-19

4. 2020 has been a challenging year. COVID-19 has been an unprecedented crisis for the entire world. Even now, countries have to balance carefully between epidemic control and restarting their economies.

5. China and Singapore have both achieved steady progress in managing COVID-19.
   a. China has taken firm and decisive measures to contain new clusters, and showed that with the right testing, tracking and intervention measures, the spread of the virus can be swiftly controlled.
b. Singapore’s community cases have come down substantially, with only 4 community cases in the past week. Our fatality rate remains one of the lowest in the world. We have begun to open up our economy in a phased and safe manner.

c. However, we must remain vigilant in the fight against COVID-19.

6. With precautions in place, it is also important that we keep our borders as well as trading and supply lines open. Singapore has started to reopen our economy to our varied trading partners and foreign visitors, in phases.

7. We established the reciprocal green lane arrangement between Singapore and China in June 2020 to facilitate essential business and official travel. It was Singapore’s first reciprocal green lane arrangement with another country, and it was also China’s first with a Southeast Asian country. Tianjin is one of the six existing reciprocal green lane provinces and municipalities in China.

8. Since 6 Nov 2020, we have also lifted our border restrictions for travellers from mainland China. They will undergo a COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test upon arrival in Singapore. If the result is negative, they will be able to go about their activities in Singapore, without the need to serve a Stay-Home Notice or adhere to preset itineraries.

9. I hope Singapore and Tianjin can build on this progress, and normalise our trading, supply, and people-to-people links as soon as situations permit on both sides.

Longstanding Cooperation between Singapore and Tianjin

10. 2020 is significant because it marks the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and China. Singapore and Tianjin too enjoy a warm and longstanding friendship. We have two cooperation platforms with Tianjin. We first established the STETC in 2007. In 2008, our cooperation was elevated when both sides agreed for our second Government-to-Government (G-to-G) project, the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City to be sited in Tianjin.

11. Our cooperation has progressed with the times, reflecting the opportunities and demands in line with the development in Singapore and Tianjin.

12. We have seen progress in economic engagements. In 2019, our bilateral trade with Tianjin grew 17.6% year-on-year to US$2.43 billion. We have seen a 52.6% increase in investments in Tianjin in 2019. Many Tianjin enterprises such as Tianjin Zhonghuan (天津中环) have also used Singapore as a springboard to internationalise.

13. We have also seen the Tianjin Eco-City transformed from a barren, polluted wasteland into a green and vibrant city with a population of 100,000 people today.

14. Besides environmental and ecological transformation, the Tianjin Eco-City has also made good progress in becoming a business and tourist destination. Between 2014
and August this year, the number of registered companies has increased seven-fold from 1,300 to 9,200. Visitor numbers exceeded 6.5 million in 2019.

15. To encourage more Singapore businesses to set up their presence in the Eco-City, I officiated the launch of the Singapore Centre last year, a one-stop shared office platform for Singapore-based enterprises. This year, the Singapore Centre is launching an International Business Alliance to support Singapore companies expanding into China through the Singapore Centre, as well as to facilitate the overseas market expansion of Tianjin-based enterprises through Singapore.

16. I am glad to note these positive developments in the Eco-City. Both our Governments had envisaged the Eco-City project as a model that could be replicated in other cities. In this regard, we have seen, for example how the Eco-City’s experience in water rehabilitation has been replicated in the Xiong’An New Area’s (雄安新区) Baiyangdian (白洋淀) Lake basin.

Elevating Collaboration between Singapore and Tianjin

17. When Deputy Prime Minister Heng and I visited Tianjin last year, we met with Tianjin Party Secretary Li Hongzhong. We had a good discussion and agreed there was great potential to deepen collaboration between Singapore and Tianjin. This has led to the MOU on enhanced cooperation which both Mayor Liao and I will be signing later. We have agreed to deepen our collaboration in three priority areas, namely (i) Sustainable and Smart Development, (ii) Trade and Investment, and (iii) People-to-People Exchanges. These are areas that both Tianjin and Singapore find worthwhile to pursue.

Sustainable and Smart Development

18. First, on sustainable and smart development. The Tianjin Eco-City has been a successful demonstration of our collaboration, and we can promote the replication of the project’s experiences to other cities in China, in support of China’s green development priorities and 2060 goal to become carbon neutral. Such experiences can be extended to other cities along the Belt and Road as well.

19. Party Secretary Li also spoke about how Tianjin Eco-City should continually upgrade itself to be a model smart city development for Tianjin and the rest of China, and this could advance China’s socio-economic development and support its pursuit of high quality and green development.

20. To support this effort, Singapore and Tianjin companies and institutes have come together to jointly promote, publicise and export the project’s experience and eco-solutions through the “Global Institute for Sustainable Urban Development” and the “China-Singapore Green Construction Development Alliance”. This is a good start.
Trade and Investment

21. Second, on trade and investment. We have heard insightful presentations by various companies and agencies earlier, reflecting the continued interests by both sides to deepen collaboration in areas such as smart city development, single windows cooperation, port development, and healthcare.

22. Our businesses continue to see potential in Jing-Jin-Ji. For instance, PSA is keen to share its experiences on smart port development and supply chain logistics with Tianjin Port Group. SATS has set up a central kitchen in Tianjin, while Perennial has also invested in an integrated healthcare development in Tianjin. These projects will not only serve the needs of Tianjin, but also support the development of the Jing-Jin-Ji region.

23. We have also seen progress in trade facilitation since our last council. I am pleased to note that the Singapore Customs and the General Administration of Customs of the People’s Republic of China (GACC) are working towards the signing of a MOU on China-Singapore (Tianjin) Customs Twinning Cooperation to strengthen trade facilitation and enhance trade security between our countries. Good progress has also been made for our international connectivity collaboration with China. The exchange of electronic Certificates of Origin and electronic Certificates of Non-Manipulation between Singapore and China has gone live since November 2019 and we are moving into the next phase of collaboration to exchange permit data, which would facilitate companies’ submission of customs declaration in both countries. Singapore and Tianjin ports are among the top 10 ports in the world. I believe that our port operators, PSA and the Tianjin Port Group, can deepen their collaboration to catalyse the transformation of Tianjin Port to become a next generation smart and green port. This will in turn enhance Tianjin’s status as a leading maritime hub in North China.

People-to-People Exchanges

24. Third, on people-to-people exchanges, we have agreed on several initiatives which will forge friendships, promote mutual understanding and enrich the lives of our people in Singapore and Tianjin. For a start, Singapore’s Temasek Polytechnic and the National Animation Industrial Park in the Eco-City will jointly promote entrepreneurship, industry projects in information technology and serious gaming, as well as offer exchanges, attachments and internship opportunities for staff and students in Singapore and Tianjin. Temasek Polytechnic will also partner Tianjin Vocational Institute to provide entrepreneur training and conduct student exchanges. In addition, Singapore’s National Library Board and the Sino-Singapore Friendship Library in the Eco-City have also agreed to engage in book and cultural exchanges.

25. We can explore expanding our people-to-people and cultural exchanges in future, which would increase the vibrancy of our cities. For example, Singapore’s museums

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3 Source: Lloyd’s List One Hundred Ports 2020. This ranking measures each port’s throughput figures in 2019. Tianjin’s TEU reached 17,264,000 TEU. This was a 8.1% y-on-y increase from 2018. Tianjin is ranked after (1) Shanghai, (2) Singapore, (3) Ningbo-Zhoushan, (4) Shenzhen, (5) Guangzhou, (6) Busan, (7) Qingdao, and (8) Hong Kong.
are home to interesting collections from the cities along the Belt and Road. The museums’ professionals in Singapore and Tianjin should meet to discuss future collaborations.

26. All these new initiatives, as well as the development of a vibrant and smart Eco-City from barren land, would not have been possible without the close partnership between our officials and companies. I am confident that these collaborations will bring the partnership between Singapore and Tianjin to the next level.

Conclusion

27. In closing, I would like to thank Mayor Liao, the Tianjin Municipal Government, our Council members and all delegates for your strong support in ensuring the success of the 9th STETC meeting.

28. While we cannot meet in person today, I look forward to hosting Mayor Liao and his delegation in Singapore when the situation permits.

29. 最后，我想感谢廖市长，天津市政府和所有的理事会成员一直以来的支持。我也期待新津合作在大家的协助下会更上一层楼，结出更多硕果。我在此祝各位朋友身体健康，万事顺心！

I would also like to wish all of you good health and I look forward to the continued momentum of the partnership between Singapore and Tianjin.

30. 谢谢！

Thank you.
Background information on the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city

1. The Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city is a bilateral collaboration project between Singapore and China to develop an economically vibrant, socially harmonious, environmentally friendly and resource-efficient city in Tianjin. It provides a platform for both countries to explore new collaborations, pilot new ideas and share best practices in the area of urbanisation. The Eco-city aims to be a model for sustainable development for other cities in China and the rest of the world.

2. As the second flagship project between Singapore and China, the Eco-city helps to further broaden and deepen the bilateral partnership, and provides a new platform for engagement between the leaders, officials and businesses of both countries.

3. The entire Eco-city project spans 30 km², including a start-up area of 8 km². When the project broke ground in 2008, it was a site comprising mainly salt pans, barren land and polluted water-bodies. Through the joint efforts of Singaporean and Chinese stakeholders, the Eco-city has made significant progress in the areas of environmental rehabilitation, green buildings, renewable energy, water management, and environmental protection. These include rehabilitating its 2.6 km² wastewater pond, conducting research in green development, developing green building standards and constructing green buildings, tapping renewable energy sources (wind, solar and geothermal energies), encouraging residents to lead environmentally-friendly lifestyles, and promoting green transport.

Development status of the Tianjin Eco-city

4. The Eco-city has made significant progress in its development. Completed projects include industry parks, Smart City Operations Centre (SCOC), residential developments, and social amenities such as three Community Centres, 21 Residents’ Centres, 10 schools and 13 kindergartens with over 10,000 students, public parks and a 350-bed Tianjin Medical University Sino-Singapore Eco-city Hospital.

5. The start-up area has been completed and the development has progressed to the central district with the focus on creating a vibrant city centre to serve residents and visitors in the Eco-city and its surrounding regions. The city centre, which will be about 1 km², will be the heart of commercial, leisure and recreational activities to enhance the Eco-city’s attractiveness to businesses and talent to support the future growth of the Eco-city.

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4 The three industrial parks that have been launched are the National Animation Industry Park, Eco-Business Park, and Eco-Industrial Park. Two more industrial parks – Eco-Information Park and Huaqiang 3D Movie Industry Park – are currently being constructed.

5 Constructed in 2018, the Smart City Operations Centre (SCOC) is the flagship smart city project in the Eco-city. The SCOC aims to serve as a one-stop location to centrally monitor all public utilities infrastructure, and to be a one-stop command centre for all municipal services and emergency management.

6 The Community Centre is a commercial-cum-community centre that provides a comprehensive range of social services and amenities. For example, the No. 3 Community Centre includes a polyclinic, a wet market and facilities for community activities. It has adapted elements of Singapore’s Community Clubs.
6. The number of people living or working in the Eco-city has grown by five times from 20,000 in 2014 to over 100,000. There are some 9,200 registered companies in the Eco-city with a total registered capital of RMB 330 billion. These companies are in businesses in areas such as culture and creativity, information technology, energy conservation and environmental protection, research and development, modern services, etc.

7. Tourism and MICE activities in the Eco-city are also enjoying increasing vibrancy. Facilities such as the Hilton Hotel and the Huaqiang Fantawild Adventure Theme Park have helped to attract over 6.5 million visitors in 2019.

8. The Eco-city is also deepening its development as a smart eco-city. It has a Smart Operations Centre, which serves as a “city brain” to integrate and analyse citywide data to deliver better government and municipal services. The Eco-city has been piloting smart solutions, such as autonomous public buses and smart carparks. A set of “Guidelines for the Construction of Smart Residential Areas” (Guidelines) was launched in June this year to provide guidance and evaluation standards for the construction of smart residential areas in the Eco-city. *Seasons Heights*, the Eco-city’s first smart estate in the Start-up Area, was also completed this year, piloting the five areas under the Guidelines. These smart initiatives will make the city greener and lives more convenient.

9. Beyond the smart and eco-development of the Eco-city, Singapore and China are also cooperating to promote the replication of the Eco-city's development experience to other cities in China and along the Belt and Road. The Global Institute for Sustainable Urban Development (SSTEC) will be jointly established by Eco-city Administrative Committee, Keppel Group, Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city Investment and Development Co., Ltd. and other Chinese partners by 2021 as a platform to publicise, promote and export the Eco-city's development experience.

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7 Meetings, incentives, conferencing, exhibitions.
Background on Tianjin

- Tianjin is one of the four municipalities under the direct administration of the Central Government⁸. In 2019, Tianjin’s GDP grew by 4.8% to reach RMB 1.4 trillion and is among the top 10 contributors to China’s GDP.

- As the leading economic hub of Tianjin, the Tianjin Binhai New Area 天津滨海新区 (TBNA) contributes more than half of the municipality’s GDP. It is home to MNCs and companies across industries, such as automotive, electronics, pharmaceutical, petrochemical, food-packaging, etc. The TBNA is made up of five functional zones - Dongjiang Bonded Port Zone, Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area (TEDA), Bonded Zone, Hi-tech Zone and Tianjin Eco-City.

- Tianjin’s economic growth is driven by its services sector, which accounts for 63.5% of its GDP in 2019. Other key pillars of its economy include manufacturing and automotive.

- To enhance its economic competitiveness, Tianjin is focusing on developing emerging industries (including IT, biopharmaceuticals, new-energy vehicles), LNG, and healthcare sectors, as new growth drivers.

Background on Singapore-Tianjin economic relations

- In 2019, Singapore’s trade with Tianjin grew by 17.6% year-on-year to reach US$2.43 billion. In the first quarter of 2020, bilateral trade reached close to US$0.5 billion, a 9.4% increase compared to the same period last year.

- As at end 2019, there are over 1,000 Singapore projects in Tianjin with a cumulative investment of more than US$10 billion.

- Singapore’s investments in Tianjin cover various sectors, such as logistics, real estate, environmental, and electronics sectors.

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⁸ The other three municipalities are Beijing, Shanghai and Chongqing.