

**SPEECH BY MRS JOSEPHINE TEO, SENIOR
MINISTER OF STATE,
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, MINISTRY OF
TRANSPORT AND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS,
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 8TH CO-
OPERATION FORUM, AT RESORT WORLD
SENTOSA,
ON MONDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2015, 9.00AM**

Mr Lucien Wong,
Chairman, Maritime and Port Authority, Singapore

Professor Tommy Koh,
Ambassador-at-large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Singapore

Captain Bobby R Mamahit,
Director General for Sea Transportation, Ministry of
Transportation, Indonesia

Captain Mohamad Halim Ahmed,
Director, Safety of Navigation Division, Marine
Department, Malaysia

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am pleased to join you at the Opening Ceremony of the 8th Co-operation Forum. To our guests from overseas, a very warm welcome to Singapore. The Co-operation Forum is one of the three pillars of the Co-operative Mechanism on Safety of Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. Since the Forum was started, it has grown steadily and today, enjoys strong support from all the stakeholders.

Importance of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, and the Co-operative Mechanism

2 The Straits of Malacca and Singapore is one of the busiest and most important shipping lanes in the world,

linking Asia to the Middle East, Europe and Africa. Last year, nearly 80,000 vessels carrying about a third of the world's traded goods, transited the Straits.

3 With increasing stability and gravity of the region, vessel traffic through the Straits and its importance can be expected to grow. It is therefore crucial that the Straits not only remain open to navigation, but also be safe and clean.

4 The Co-operative Mechanism plays a key role in keeping the Straits open, safe and clean. As a platform purposefully designed to addressing matters of common interest concerning the Straits, it brings together all the key stakeholders to exchange information, discuss issues and explore collaborations to enhance navigational safety and environmental protection. The

three littoral States – Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore – as well as key user States and the industry deserve commendation for investing significant time and effort in the process, and making significant advances in the Co-operative Mechanism.

5 Indeed, since its inception in 2007, the Co-operative Mechanism has grown in strength and stature. It is now recognised as the central framework for international co-operation on matters relating to the Straits. The strong attendance at this Forum reflects the critical role and value that the littoral States, the user States and the industry accord to this Mechanism.

Progress made under the Co-operative Mechanism's Three Pillars

6 I am glad to note that the Co-operative Mechanism, through its three complementary pillars – the Cooperation Forum, the Aids to Navigation Fund and the Project Co-ordination Committee, has made substantial progress on numerous fronts.

7 The Co-operation Forum has proven to be a useful platform for discussions as well as an enabler for action on vital matters relating to the Straits. Conversations at this Forum have led to meaningful initiatives. One example is the Ship Traffic Management System project, which aims to optimise vessel traffic flow in the approaches to and passage through the Straits. You will note the good project progress from the update at today's meeting. More importantly, the many ships plying the Straits will soon experience improved traffic flows.

8 The second and third pillars of the Co-operative Mechanism – the Aids to Navigation Fund and Project Co-ordination Committee – are also making great strides.

9 Since its launch in 2007, the Aids to Navigation Fund has received a total contribution of about US\$20.9 million. This has provided for the upkeep of over 50 critical aids to navigation in the Straits, making the waterway much safer. I would like to thank the donors for their generous contributions to this Fund.

10 As for the Project Co-ordination Committee, a total of 10 projects have been put under its charge. Four have been completed, while the remaining six are making good progress. An important project that has

been completed is a concept study on the real-time monitoring of under keel clearance in the Straits. The study recommended, among others, that a Joint Hydrographic Survey of the Straits be conducted. Given its importance, I am delighted to learn that the survey will be launched tomorrow at this very Forum. When completed, the survey and the other recommended actions will contribute significantly to preventing grounding incidents.

Closing

11 The achievements of the Co-operative Mechanism would not have been possible without the commitment of the littoral States, key user States and industry partners. As vessel traffic through the Straits increases and the waterway grows in significance, we should work

even more closely together. It is only through stronger partnership that the Co-operative Mechanism can continue to play its vital role in enhancing navigational safety and environmental protection in the Straits, bringing greater benefits to all our peoples.

12 On this note, I declare the 8th Co-operation Forum open and wish everyone a fruitful meeting. Thank you.