

18 - 19 July 2022

**OPENING REMARKS -
SINGAPORE**

**BY MS QUAH LEY HOON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MARITIME AND PORT
AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE, AT THE 13th CO-OPERATION FORUM AT THE
INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, 18 JULY 2022**

Dato' Haji Baharin, Director-General, Marine Department, Malaysia

Mr Hengki Angkasawan, Director of Navigation, Directorate General of Sea Transportation, Indonesia,

Captain Mohamad Halim Ahmed, Deputy Director General of Marine, Marine Department Malaysia,

Ms Norhasliza Mat Salleh, Deputy Undersecretary, Maritime Division Ministry of Transport, Malaysia,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Selamat Pagi. Let me first apologise for not being able to attend the Cooperation Forum in person due to COVID-19, but to log in virtually. I had really looked forward to be in KL for this meeting. I would like to therefore thank the Marine Department Malaysia for the warm hospitality extended to the delegates, and making arrangements for me to log on virtually. *Terimah Kasih.* It has been more than 2 years since the last Co-operation Forum when we met in Indonesia, so we are really happy to reconnect with friends again.

2. For the past 2 years, COVID-19 has greatly disrupted our way of life, and result in structural shifts in the way we live, work and play. Options such as work-from-home, virtual or hybrid meetings, like what we have today, safe-distancing measures for our daily lives, as well as new crew change protocol and digital clearance for maritime work would remain options and contingencies for us to be better prepared for any future pandemics. Ahead of us, we still have to face with geopolitical developments such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine and economic uncertainty such as rising commodity and energy prices, inflation, rising interest rates and potentially recession.

Importance of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore Remains

3. In spite of these uncertainties, one thing is certain – the strategic and economic importance of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore will remain. More than one quarter of global containers and one third of global energy commodities come through this Straits, connecting Asia with the Middle East, Europe and Africa. The freedom and safety of key shipping lanes, including these Straits, must be safeguarded.

4. As the three Littoral States along SOMS, we must continue to work with the international community to keep the Straits safe, clean and open for navigation. Any congestion and accidents in the Straits can cause major delays with significant repercussions on the global supply chain.

International Collaboration Required to Safeguard Straits for International Shipping

5. Singapore places very strong emphasis on the safe and open navigation of the SOMS. Thus, the Co-operative Mechanism which was established in 2007, provides a very important, transparent, open and inclusive platform for dialogue with all stakeholders and users of the Straits. It has grown in strength and stature over the years, and is now recognised as the central framework for international co-operation on matters concerning the Straits.

6. The wide representation from user States and the industry for today's Cooperation Forum is also testament to the value that the global shipping community recognises and shares in this process.

7. On top of CF, the Aids to Navigation Fund (ANF) has received about US\$24 million in both pledged and actual contributions from user States, industry groups and the IMO, allowing the maintenance and replacement of critical aids to navigation in the Straits, for ships transiting the Straits.

8. The Project Co-ordination Committee has also overseen the implementation of a total of seven Straits projects by the littoral and user States. These projects have either been successfully completed or are progressing well.

9. Singapore is deeply committed to working with the littoral States, user States and industry stakeholders under the Co-operative Mechanism to advance our common interests and enhance our collaborations.

10. One way for us to enhance our collaborations is through technology as a key enabler that would allow us to better achieve our goals as the three Littoral States. At this year's Co-operation Forum, we will share more on the developments on the VHF Data Exchange System, or VDES in short. As the next generation Automatic Identification System (AIS), VDES has the potential to enhance navigational safety in the Straits. We hope to have deeper conversations with interested parties on developing possible projects and trials for the Straits. It will be a multi-year plan, and we should start early.

11. The potential of collaborating on technology is huge. Beyond VDES, other areas which we could also tap on technology will include vessel traffic management systems, remote pilotage and maritime autonomous surface ships. We hope to come up with more collaborations for our steps moving forward.

Conclusion

12. To conclude, my team and I look forward to the constructive and fruitful dialogues with Littoral States, Malaysia and Indonesia, and various stakeholders that we will have at this Forum.

13. Thank You.