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**FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
ON
CLIMATE CHANGE
BUENOS AIRES, 12 NOV 98**

**Delivered by
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Madam President
Your Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of my Minister, Mr Yeo Cheow Tong, Minister for Health and Minister for the Environment, allow me to first convey our appreciation to the Government of Argentina and the Governor for hosting this Conference in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires. Our congratulations also go to Her Excellency, Maria Julia Alsogaray, Secretary of Natural Resources and Sustainable Development for the Republic of Argentina, for being unanimously elected President of COP-4. I am confident that under Her Excellency's able leadership, we will have a fruitful and successful outcome to COP-4.

Your Excellencies

2 Delegates from more than 120 countries are gathered here in Buenos Aires to discuss the climate change issue. This reflects the emphasis that we have placed in controlling greenhouse gas emission. We are all too familiar with the adverse effects of climate change - rising global temperature, increased precipitation and rising sea level which in turn affect human well-being, agriculture, forestry, water resources, coastal areas, species and natural areas.

3 It is with this concern that the long but sustained negotiation process on climate change was initiated. Several milestones have since been achieved - the Convention, the Berlin Mandate, the Geneva Ministerial Declaration and the first legal instrument under the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol. To transform all these into reality, we need concrete action now.

4 As you may recall, the basic principle of the Convention is one of common but differentiated responsibilities. This principle has manifested itself in the Kyoto Protocol. The developed countries must now display true leadership in this global effort by fulfilling their obligations under the Berlin Mandate and their commitment to a meaningful reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Singapore urges these countries to lead the way in fulfilling the objective of the Convention.

5 Developing countries too, are also playing their part as most, if not all, have already embarked on emission mitigation programmes even though they are not obliged to do so under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. Singapore is fully committed to the global effort although we are in a somewhat unique situation with respect to the Convention. Let me elaborate.

6 As my Minister for the Environment, Mr Yeo Cheow Tong had said at the Kyoto Conference, we are a small island city state with no potential to develop non-fossil alternative sources of energy. Our economy is structured to grow through the production of high value-added goods and services, through high capital investments in manufacturing and commerce, and in automation and information technology. Our energy use will therefore continue to increase as our economy matures further and our population increases.

7 Notwithstanding this, we will continue to institute measures within our limited capacity to contain our CO₂ emissions. Our efforts include improving energy efficiency and enhancing energy conservation, exploring the greater use of natural gas in place of fuel oil for power generation and encouraging the greater use of public transport.

8 Although many developing countries would want to endeavour to do more, they may not be able to do so due to lack of the necessary resources and technical capabilities. The recent economic crisis has further diminished the limited resources and capabilities of many countries including Singapore. Technological and financial assistance, as called for under the Convention, is therefore crucial to the developing countries to sustain their efforts in this direction. Any effort to impose emission reduction targets on developing countries will also further strain their economies and hinder them from doing more within their abilities. This is also not in the spirit of the Convention.

9 The Kyoto Protocol is a positive step in our global effort. Let us therefore keep up the momentum and focus our minds and energy on what has already been agreed at the Rio Summit and uphold the Berlin Mandate.

10 Over the last ten days, delegates have worked extremely hard, and often long hours, to seek common ground on what developed countries can do before the first commitment period to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. Although discussions have been intense and at times inconclusive, I am comforted that the consultations undertaken at COP-4 have given new and better insights into the specific needs and concerns of each country party. This increased level of understanding, I am optimistic, would pave the way for even more constructive discussions at subsequent meetings of the FCCC fora.

11 No country would be spared the threat of global warming. Singapore sincerely hopes that the concerted efforts being made by all countries present here in protecting the global climate, within their individual capabilities and based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, would be viewed by future generations as an achievement which they are grateful for and which they can be proud of.

12 Thank you.