

**JOINT STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD AND PRIME MINISTER LEE HSIEN LOONG AT THE 9TH MALAYSIA - SINGAPORE LEADERS' RETREAT IN PUTRAJAYA ON 9 APRIL 2019**

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1. Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong met in Putrajaya on 9 April 2019 for the 9<sup>th</sup> Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat. This being their first Retreat together, both Leaders iterated their renewed commitment to this continuing annual engagement as a platform for cooperation and discussing issues of mutual concern.
2. Reflecting on the strong historical links, and 54 years of diplomatic relations that bind both nations, both Leaders reiterated their commitment to preserving the vital relations and to improving bilateral ties on the basis of equality and mutual respect. The steady stream of visits and exchanges over the past year demonstrates both countries' commitment to developing new areas of cooperation. The Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to resolve issues of concern in an amicable and constructive manner.
3. Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad congratulated Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Singapore's successful Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2018. The Leaders also welcomed the development of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network, as a platform to pursue smart city projects to improve the lives of ASEAN citizens. The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of ASEAN in maintaining regional stability and promoting closer economic integration. They reiterated their support for the ASEAN-centric regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based. Both Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together and the ASEAN Leaders' Vision for a Resilient and Innovative ASEAN.
4. Both Leaders underscored the strong bilateral economic ties between Malaysia and Singapore and emphasised the importance of deepening trade and investment cooperation in the current uncertain global environment.
5. Singapore and Malaysia have always been major economic partners. Singapore is Malaysia's largest source of tourist arrivals, while around 1.2 million visitors from Malaysia visit Singapore every year. Both countries are each other's second largest trading partner. Bilateral trade increased by an average of 12% per annum from 2016 to 2018. Likewise, both countries are also important investment partners to each other.
6. The Leaders noted the strong ties between the business communities from Singapore and Malaysia. They noted the broad scope for companies from both countries to collaborate widely, especially in areas such as digital economy and Industry 4.0.
7. The Leaders welcomed the progress made by Malaysia and Singapore in implementing the recommendations of the Working Group on maritime issues surrounding the Johor Bahru Port Limits off Tanjung Piai and Singapore Port Limits off Tuas to resolve the situation on the ground, paving the way for maritime boundary delimitation of the area. The Leaders welcomed the establishment of the committee to commence negotiations on maritime boundary delimitation in the area within one (1) month, following the implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group and noted that the said committee will be chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore.

8. The Leaders looked forward to the convening of the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Malaysia-Singapore Joint Technical Committee on the Implementation of the International Court of Justice Judgment on Pedra Branca, Middle Rocks and South Ledge to resolve outstanding bilateral maritime boundary delimitation issues in the area.
9. Both Leaders looked forward to the determination of the actual location of the points of the international boundary pursuant to the 'Agreement between the Government of Malaysia and the Government of the Republic of Singapore to Delimit Precisely the Territorial Waters Boundary in Accordance with the Straits Settlements and Johore Territorial Waters Agreement 1927' signed on 7 August 1995.
10. The Leaders also welcomed the agreement between the two countries for Singapore to withdraw the Instrument Landing System procedures for Seletar Airport and for Malaysia to suspend the permanent Restricted Area over Pasir Gudang airspace indefinitely. This would allow flights approaching and departing Seletar Airport to be based on visual approach in accordance with the Singapore Aeronautical Information Publication.
11. The Leaders noted that a High Level Committee has been set up to review the Operational Letter of Agreement between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore Area Control Centres concerning Singapore Arrivals, Departures and Overflights signed in 1974.
12. The Leaders reaffirmed the significant benefits of strengthening Malaysia-Singapore transport connectivity. In this respect, both Leaders acknowledged the importance of alleviating congestion in a comprehensive manner at the Causeway and Second Link. They agreed to explore further initiatives, including the use of new technology, for enhanced security and checkpoint efficiency.
13. Both Leaders welcomed the progress made on discussions regarding the Johor Bahru-Singapore Rapid Transit System (RTS) Link Project. Both Leaders noted that Malaysia had proposed, and Singapore had agreed to consider, suspending the RTS Link Project for six (6) months from 1 April 2019, in a manner similar to that for the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High Speed Rail Project. Both Leaders instructed their officials to further deliberate on the matter and to finalise the terms of the suspension.
14. Malaysia expressed appreciation to Singapore for agreeing to suspend the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High Speed Rail Project for a period up to 31 May 2020 through the exchange of legal documents between both sides on 5 September 2018. The Leaders noted that Malaysia is exploring the possible way forward with the aim of cost reduction.
15. The Leaders noted both sides' interest to identify appropriate and timely measures, including schemes, to increase the yield of the Johore River, and to safeguard its environmental conditions and water quality, to the extent required by the 1962 Johore River Water Agreement (1962 Agreement).
16. The Leaders also noted the differing positions of both sides on the right to review the price of water under the 1962 Agreement. Both Leaders agreed for the Attorneys-General of both sides to discuss these differing positions.

17. Both sides will seek amicable solutions, including the possibility of dispute resolution through arbitration on a mutually agreed basis.
18. The Leaders expressed their satisfaction on the ongoing cooperation under the purview of the Joint Ministerial Committee for Iskandar Malaysia (JMCIM). Both Leaders looked forward to the convening of the 14th Meeting of the JMCIM in Singapore later this year to take stock of the progress made in the respective immigration, tourism, transportation links, environment, iconic project and industrial cooperation work groups. Singapore noted the recent announcement by Malaysia on the expansion of Iskandar Malaysia. Both Leaders acknowledged prospects for further cooperation on the development of Iskandar Malaysia.
19. The Leaders reiterated their commitment to promote and explore further links to improve connectivity between Malaysia and Singapore. They noted ongoing discussions on Malaysia's proposal for a new ferry route between Singapore and the Pasir Gudang Ferry Terminal. They also noted Malaysia's request for an extension of the land lease of Changi Ferry Terminal under the Agreement for the Construction and Operation of a Ferry Terminal and the Operation of a Ferry Service between Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore.
20. The Leaders commended the ongoing cooperation on environmental issues with transboundary implications, through platforms such as the Malaysia-Singapore Joint Committee on the Environment (MSJCE) and the outcome of the last MSJCE meeting held in September 2018 in Putrajaya, Malaysia. Both countries reiterated their commitment to enhance the existing bilateral cooperation on the environment, including issues with transboundary implications, particularly in the area of monitoring marine and air quality as well as transboundary waste movements. Both Leaders reiterated the importance of enhancing capabilities to address areas of mutual concern, and emphasised the importance of information sharing and implementing mitigating measures.
21. The Leaders reiterated that the historical and cultural links between both countries are the foundation for stronger relations and have been further strengthened with cultural exchanges. The Leaders looked forward to the launch of the inaugural Triennial Malaysia-Singapore Cultural Showcase in the second-half of 2019 in Kuala Lumpur with the theme of "Youth".
22. The Leaders welcomed potential cooperation in the areas of youth and sports especially the feasibility of eSports development and empowerment of youth through volunteerism, leadership and exchange programmes.
23. Both Leaders noted ongoing exchanges between Singapore's Ministry of Communications and Information and Malaysia's Ministry of Communications and Multimedia at the annual Malaysia-Singapore Joint Committee in the field of Information and Communications. The Leaders also took note of the progress made towards concluding a Memorandum of Understanding to Promote Cooperation on Data, Cybersecurity and Digital Economy by October 2019.
24. The Leaders welcomed the good progress made by Singapore's EZ-Link and Malaysia's Touch 'n Go to launch a cross-border Combi Card that can be used by motorists who travel in both countries. When officially implemented, the dual-currency Combi Card would allow users to pay for road tolls and parking charges in both countries with the same card.

25. They also noted the partnership between NETS of Singapore and PayNet of Malaysia to accept Singapore Banks issued NETS ATM Cards in Malaysia and Malaysia Banks issued MyDebit ATM Cards in Singapore. Currently, Singapore consumers are able to use their NETS ATM Cards to make payment at over 3,500 acceptance points throughout Malaysia, which marked the first time that NETS ATM Cards could be used to make payment outside Singapore. MyDebit ATM Cards will be accepted in Singapore from the 3rd Quarter of 2019 onwards.
26. The Leaders acknowledged the ongoing cooperation between both countries' agencies and institutions, bilaterally and in collaboration with the United States and Switzerland, in investigating offences, sharing information on bank accounts, fund transfers, and other transactions associated with the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) fund flows, and recovering assets. They noted that the Singapore courts had ordered the return of approximately S\$15 million of 1MDB-related funds to Malaysia, and that efforts to further recover assets were ongoing. Singapore authorities were also rendering mutual legal assistance in obtaining records held by financial institutions and facilitating witness interviews, in accordance with Singapore law. The Leaders encouraged authorities from both countries to keep up their excellent working relationship.
27. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong invited Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali to attend Singapore's Bicentennial National Day Parade on 9 August 2019, and Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir accepted the invitation. Prime Minister Lee looked forward to hosting Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir for this important milestone celebration.
28. The Leaders looked forward to Singapore hosting the 10th Retreat in 2020.

**9 April 2019**