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- Celebrating 50 Years of
Friendship with Singapore



Interview

Amb Joseph Del Mar Yap





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PHOTOGRAPHS Singapore's Prime Minister Office, Ministry of Culture and Information and Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Photos appearing in this issue courtesy of:
- Singapore Prime Ministers Office
- Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Singapore Ministry of Communication & Information
- Istana.org.sg



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Presentation of Credentials

The presentation of credentials to President Halimah Yacob at the Istana on 31st May 2022

H.E. Sun Haiyan, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China



PRIOR to her posting to Singapore Ambassador Sun Haiyan was the Director-General of the Bureau I of CPCID and was responsible for exchanges with South and Southeast Asian countries.

Ambassador Sun Haiyan was born in 1972 in Hebei Province, China. She joined the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPCID) in 1997, where she served in various capacities including as Director of the Research Office, Director-General of the China Centre for Contemporary World Studies, and Director-General of the Public Information and Communication Bureau and concurrently CPCID Spokesperson. During her career, she also worked in Zibo City, Shandong Province. Ambassador Sun graduated with an LL.D. degree from Peking University. She is married with one daughter.

H.E. Amenatave Vakasavuwaqa Yauvoli, High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji



PRIOR to his appointment to Singapore, High Commissioner Yauvoli held concurrent accreditation to Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. He is also the Permanent Representative of Fiji to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific. He has more than 30 years of experience as a civil servant and diplomat, including positions as the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013-2014), Interim Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Development Forum (2015), Ambassador for Climate Change & Oceans (2015-2016) and Director General/CEO of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (2016-2020).

High Commissioner Yauvoli holds a Bachelor's Degree in Economic and Management from the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and a Master's Degree in Commerce (Development Economics) from the University of Wollongong, Australia.

High Commissioner Yauvoli is married to Ruci Yauvoli and has five children and seven grandchildren.

H.E. Santiago Chávez Pareja, Ambassador of the Republic of Ecuador



A career diplomat, Ambassador Santiago Chávez began his work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility in 1981. In June 2018, he was appointed Vice-Minister of Human Mobility and in the same year he undertook the Presidency of the Global Forum on Migration and Development 2019.

Ambassador Chávez has a Master's degree in Security and Development with a mention in Public Management and Business Management from the Institute of Higher National Studies. He also has a degree in Legal Sciences from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador (PUCE). He has participated in several specialization courses and internships in areas of International Relations in Italy, China, Japan, USA and Switzerland. He was a Lecturer on Legal Settlement of WTO Trade Disputes and Latin American International Relations at the School of Law and the School of Human Sciences at PUCE, respectively.

Ambassador Chávez is married to María Augusta Hidalgo Chiriboga and has two children.

PRIOR to his accreditation to Singapore, Ambassador Santiago Chávez has held various Ecuador diplomatic appointments to the Republic of Korea, Belgium, the European Union, Luxembourg, Venezuela, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United States of America, Venezuela and Brazil.

Ambitious Agenda Set Out at ASEAN-U.S. Special Summit 2022



Photo: Ascian.org

A Joint Vision Statement by the US and ASEAN declared an ambitious agenda of objectives covering the fight with COVID to "preserving peace"

THE White House has released a Joint Vision Statement on 13th May 2022 that details an ambitious agenda that stresses on adherence to international laws, treaties and cooperation agreements and the need to create a peaceful environment in the world. The Summit celebrates the 45th anniversary of ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue relations that culminates in the establishment of the ASEAN-US Comprehensive Strategic Partnership at the 19th ASEAN-US Summit in November 2022. The main highlights of the statement declared that the US and the 10 members of ASEAN shall:

- Fight the COVID-19 pandemic, building better health security and recovering together
- Strengthen Economic Ties and Connectivity
- Promote Maritime Cooperation
- Enhance People-to-People Connectivity
- Support Sub-regional Development
- Leverage on Technologies and Promote Innovation
- Address Climate Change
- Preserve Peace and Build Trust



(Above): PM Lee and Vice-President Harris. He also met other US Cabinet Secretaries in discussions on climate action, clean energy transition and sustainable infrastructure

For the full text of the Joint Vision Statement and remarks by President Joseph Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris please visit:
www.indiplomacy.com

Timor Leste 20th Anniversary of the Restoration of Independence

Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Foreign Affairs and Second Minister for Education Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman visited Timor-Leste from 18 to 20 May 2022 to attend the inauguration ceremony of President-elect Dr Jose Ramos-Horta and the 20th Anniversary of the Restoration of Independence of the country. The visit also coincides with the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Timor-Leste on 20 May 2022.

Minister Maliki attended several commemorative events, including a dinner hosted by outgoing President Dr Francisco Guterres Lú-Olo, the inauguration

ceremony for President-elect Dr Ramos-Horta and an Official Ceremony for the Commemoration of the Restoration of Independence of Timor-Leste. Minister Maliki also met other Timor-Leste leaders during his visit. They included Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak, and Minister of Education, Youth and Sport Armindo Maia. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Adaljiza Magno.

Minister Maliki reaffirmed Singapore's support for Timor-Leste's development journey through capacity building efforts and encouraged more Timorese officials to participate in courses under the Singapore Cooperation Programme.



Timor-Leste President-elect Dr Ramos-Horta greeting Minister Maliki

PM Lee Japan Visit: New Areas of Cooperation and Presentation of Keynote at Future of Asia

PRIME Minister Lee Hsien Loong is on a working visit to Japan where he had a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Kishida Fumio on 26th May 2022. They reaffirmed Singapore and Japan's longstanding and close partnership, underpinned by multifaceted cooperation and close people-to-people ties. Both leaders also discussed ways that Singapore and Japan can deepen cooperation, including in the digital economy and green economy. The new areas of cooperation that included:

(a) the exchange of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) between GovTech and Digital Agency of Japan on digital government transformation

(b) the exchange of the MOC between

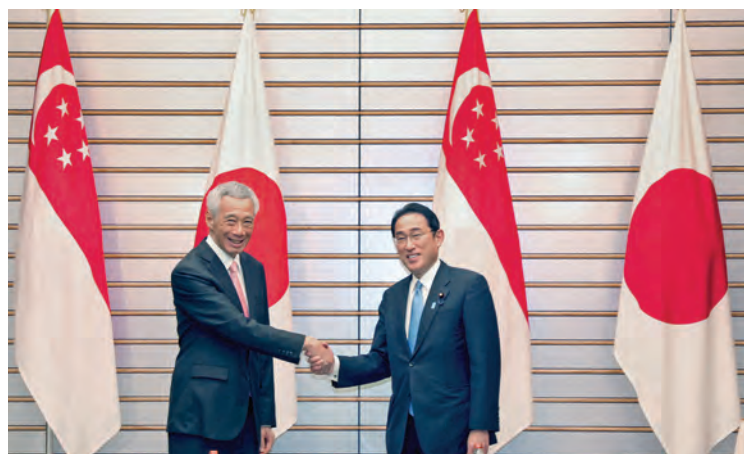
Enterprise Singapore and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) on startup and innovation cooperation

(c) the launch of the Japan-Singapore Economic Dialogue (JSED).

Prime Minister Lee also informed Prime Minister Kishida about Singapore's decision to participate in Osaka Expo 2025.

Future of Asia

In conjunction with his working visit to Japan Prime Minister Lee also delivered the keynote address at the 27th International Conference on the Future



PM Lee met Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio and they reaffirmed Singapore and Japan's longstanding and close partnership (Photo: MCI / Chwee)

of Asia organised by Nikkei Inc. Following this Prime Minister Lee held a Q&A session with the Editor-in-Chief of The Nikkei Inc Mr Shigesaburo Okumura. The theme of the conference was "Redefining Asia's role in a divided world".

For the full report and links to transcripts and videos related to the visit please go to:
www.indiplomacy.com

Malaysia Visit to Renew and Strengthen Ties



MINISTER for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan visited Malaysia from 17th to 19th May 2022 to renew and strengthen bilateral ties with the Malaysian leaders. Minister Balakrishnan also called on Malaysia's Minister of Defence Dato' Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dato' Sri Saifuddin Abdullah, as well as other Malaysian politicians and personalities.



Dr Vivian Balakrishnan called on (far left photo) Malaysian PM Ismail Sabri (left photo) Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah and the four Ministers (above photo): included Minister of Defence Hishammuddin Hussein, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, Finance Minister Datuk Seri Utama Tengku Zafrul Aziz and Communications and Multimedia Minister Annuar Musa (Photos: Singapore MFA and Dr V Balakrishnan FB)

He also had an audience with His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizzudin Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah Al-Maghfur-lah, the Deputy Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia and the Sultan of Perak.



At end of his visit, the Foreign Minister while speaking to the media expressed his satisfaction that though the last two years have been difficult both countries have been steady, reliable and dependable partners through the crisis. He was quoted as saying: "We kept our supply chains open, the flow of essential services - food, medication, logistics, supply chains were uninterrupted throughout in spite of the crisis."

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Partner Philippines

Ambassador Joseph del Mar Yap on Strengthening Special Bonds of Friendship

The Ambassador of the Philippine Embassy to Singapore tells Nomita Dhar Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of *IN Diplomacy* he felt privileged and honoured to have been part of the 50th Year anniversary celebrations of diplomatic ties with Singapore in 2019 and helped make an impact strengthening bilateral ties in these past few years

CONGRATULATIONS on the recently concluded elections and selection of Ferdinand Marcos Jr as the President -elect. This national day, The Philippines (PH) has a lot to celebrate; please share with us the role your Embassy played in helping the Filipino community in Singapore (SG) to exercise their vote smoothly.

The month-long Philippine Overseas Voting (from 10th April to 9th May 2022) saw a total of 52,908 voters, out of 84,877 registered Filipino voters participating in SG. That translates to a voter turnout rate of 62.33% which is among the highest in the Asia-Pacific region. The Philippine Embassy ensured a safe, orderly and efficient conduct of overseas voting in SG by including the following measures:

- Development of its own online pre-verification system;
- Launch of a proactive, sustained election information drive;
- Coordination with relevant Singapore government authorities such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore Police Force, Maritime and Port Authority, and Land Transport Authority;
- Effective crowd management strategies with the support of volunteers from the Filipino community; and
- Strict implementation of health and safety protocols.

Please share some of the highlights of activities held to commemorate 50 years of bilateral ties between Singapore and Philippines?

It was my privilege and honour to be serving as the PH Ambassador to Singapore during the celebrations of our 50th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2019. The series of 28 commemorative events spread throughout the year was capped with the State Visit of her Excellency President Halimah Yacob to the PH in September 2019. One of the most meaningful celebratory events was the restoration of the art work on the Alkaff Bridge, which was a gift of the late Filipina Artist Pacita Abad to the people of Singapore.

In 2004, while Pacita was on an art residency at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute she was able to obtain permission to transform the bridge from a plain, gray, functional piece of infrastructure into an art work, brought to life by her signature palette of

vibrant hues and abstract form. Unfortunately by 2019, the art work had deteriorated due to its constant exposure to the elements. The PH Embassy, together with the SG Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made a decision, and were able to obtain the necessary governmental approvals, to restore the art work.



Philippines Ambassador Joseph del Mar Yap at one of the 28 events that commemorated the 50th Anniversary

A committee chaired by Ambassador-at-large Tommy Koh and co-chaired by former PH Secretary of Finance Jose Isidro "Lito" Camacho was formed to raise the necessary funding for the project. This was achieved in a very short time as many corporations and individuals quickly stepped up to support the very worthwhile undertaking.

I am particularly proud of this project because the bridge, brightly painted in the vibrant hues and dynamic shapes favoured by Pacita Abad, truly symbolizes the strong and energetic bonds of friendship and linkage between our two countries and our two peoples.

Another wonderful project that highlighted the special bonds of friendship between the

PH and SG is the loan of a pair of critically endangered Philippine Eagles to the Wildlife Reserves Singapore, the agency running the Singapore Bird Park. SG is the only country that the PH has entered into such a loan agreement for these National Birds.

What is the balance of trade between SG and PH? Where do you see trends of potential and growth?

In 2021, SG ranked as the PH's 6th major trading partner (out of 223), 5th export market (out of 205), and 6th import supplier (out of 210).

PH exports to SG increased by 11.15% from US\$3.77 B in 2020 to US\$4.20 B in 2021. This may be generally attributed to the export of copper ores and concentrates, amounting to US\$75.79 M from zero value in 2020, and increase in the outward shipment of the following products:

- (a) Semiconductor devices manufactured from materials on consignment basis (↑17.47%)
- (b) Digital monolithic integrated circuits (↑9.71%)
- (c) Other fixed capacitors, not elsewhere specified (n.e.s.) (↑86.07%)
- (d) Storage units (↑18.33%)

Likewise, PH imports from SG expanded by 23.58% from US\$5.62 B in 2020 to US\$6.95 B in 2021. This could be attributed to the increase in the inward shipment of the following products:

- (a) Light petroleum oils and preparations thereof (↑119.07%)
- (b) Transmission apparatus incorporating reception apparatus (↑74.68%)
- (c) Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, other than light, n.e.s. (↑31.36%)
- (d) Other preparations not elsewhere specified or included (↑24.57%)
- (e) Digital monolithic integrated circuits (↑12.24%).

In 2021, SG is also ranked as the top source of approved foreign direct investment at \$1.6B, from fourth place at \$0.2B in 2020.

How has the interest of SG businesses been towards entering the PH market? Are there any new entrants and what sectors are showing an upswing?

In 2021, SG ranked as the top source of approved foreign direct investment at \$1.6B, from fourth place at \$0.2B in 2020. Indus-

Partner Philippines

tries with approved investments include ICT, manufacturing, support services, and electricity and gas.

There are several big-ticket investments that poured into the PH from SG in the last year. For instance, Singapore-based ST Telemedia Global Data Centres has formed an alliance with Globe Telecom—backed by the PH oldest conglomerate Ayala Corp.—to expand its footprint in the PH amid booming demand for server space from e-commerce and other digital platforms. SG company SpaceDC is set to build a 72MW facility, the largest hyperscale data center in the Philippines. Most recently, the Provincial Government of Batangas, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Philippines, and YCH Group, one of Asia's leading integrated logistics and supply chain providers signed an MoU, to formalise the joint interest to co-develop smart logistics infrastructure in enhancing connectivity in ASEAN.

As SG and other ASEAN countries open up again, what are the steps being taken to attract them to visit your country?

PH is among several ASEAN countries that have eased border restrictions for travelers

Which are the areas in which Singapore and The Philippines should work to improve people to people ties?

With the relaxation of safety measures and resumption of in-person activities in both the PH and SG, we can now look forward to further deepening the friendship and cooperation of both our countries and their peoples. One way to achieve this is through the conduct of sustained, impactful cultural activities which will highlight aspects of our societies and cultures, for our better appreciation. These activities will foster national pride and patriotism and will elevate our relationship to a higher point. In 2019, when we celebrated the 50 year anniversary of our bilateral relations, we had around 28 activities for the entire year which garnered overwhelming support from both the Filipinos and SG in the country.

SG serves as a second home to some 200,000 Filipino nationals employed in various fields, contributing significantly to the economic development of both countries. We are proud of our Filipino health-care professionals in SG, who are serving at the frontlines of the battle against the pandemic in multiple Singaporean hospitals and health facilities.

culminated last year in the launch of the Philippine Skills Framework (PSF), an initiative among the government, industry, and the academe for worker skills development. The interagency initiative uses the SkillsFuture Singapore framework as a reference in developing skills for local industry and creating a common skills reference to match employers and workers.

PH and SG also signed the MoU on Scientific and Technological Cooperation through the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) on 25th October 2021. The initial fields of cooperation that the parties have identified under the MoU are water and waste management, food safety and security, digital government transformation, and aquaculture, which are also among the key action points of the 5th Informal Consultations on the Philippines-Singapore Action Plan held last 14th July 2021. The MoU likewise aims to collaborate with the private sector for a more inclusive and successful program conceptualization and implementation. During my term, continued conversations have been going to a positive direction, with more emphasis on food security, particularly increasing food



"I am particularly proud of this (Alkaff Bridge Restoration) project because the bridge, rightly painted in the vibrant hues and dynamic shapes favoured by Pacita Abad, truly symbolizes the strong and energetic bonds of friendship and linkage between our two countries and our two peoples"

to the country. Beginning 30th May 2022, fully-vaccinated travellers may enter sans a pre-departure COVID test, and without having to serve quarantine in the country.

PH also continues to ramp up its major infrastructure projects and to sustain its reform momentum through the Build Build Build Program. Said programme is one of the keys in boosting tourism activities in the Philippines. According to our Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary, the PH is blessed with a highly diverse array of tourist attractions and spots. But without the necessary infrastructure, many of these locations would be out of reach to our travelers. These infrastructure projects include airports, seaports, bridges, thousands of kilometers of roads that have been built or upgraded to ensure a safe, convenient and fun experience for our tourists.

To attract more tourists to the country, the DOT is also developing sustainable tourism models through extensive waste management systems, road connections, and environmental rehabilitation programs. Successful examples include the closure and rehabilitation of Boracay Island and improving water quality and litter disposal in the regions of Panglao, El Nido, Siargao, and Manila Bay.

SG has also been the PHs' reliable and steadfast partner in developing our human resources, which is a vital component of our country's economic development. We appreciate how SG has allocated more training slots that allowed more PH officials and civil servants to participate in training and capacity-building programs under the Singapore Cooperation Program. We are also grateful for the unwavering support of the Temasek Foundation which sponsors technical and vocational education and training programs.

There are many significant MOUs that are in place between our two countries, during your term. Which one do you think is bearing best results? Could you share some success stories?

Back in 2019, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) signed a MOU with SkillsFuture Singapore to cooperate on human capital development as well as the reskilling and skills upgrading of workforce. The PH, through this MOU, sought to partner with the Singaporean government and training institutions in order to improve the preparedness of the Filipinos for the needs of industry and the demands of the global market, particularly in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This

exports (such as poultry, egg, fruits and vegetables) to SG, government e-services, and enhancing digital capabilities of SMEs.

How has your experience working with SG been in the last few years? If you could replicate something back in the Philippines and vice versa, what would that be?

I have really enjoyed my years as the PH Ambassador to SG. I have made many Singaporean friends and have really come to know and understand SG and its people much better. One thing that stands out about SG is how the government always plans ahead. Very little is left to chance. Whether it's planning the water resources of the country or the plan for food resilience dubbed '30 by 30', strategic plans are laid out and then followed through. This is something that we can learn from SG.

As the world grapples with many geopolitical issues, inflation etc, what would your wish this national day be for your country and the world.

My wish on our independence day is for all of us, and for the whole world, to be able to work together to overcome these challenges together. United as one. Dividing the world into warring camps is not the solution.

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Partner Philippines

Planting Deep Ties for 50 Years of a Golden Friendship

The Philippines and Singapore celebrated 50 years of diplomatic ties in 2019 with the pinnacle highlight being the State Visit by President Halimah Yacob to the Philippines that year. Before the start of the pandemic there have been many other events and activities that reflected the deep and lasting ties between both nations. Presented here are some of the major highlights



STATE VISIT OF PRESIDENT HALIMAH YACOB TO PHILIPPINES (8th to 12th Sept 2019) The visit to commemorate 50 years of diplomatic ties placed Philippines-Singapore relations front and centre and brought about eight wide ranging MoUs as well as stop overs in Davao's Philippine Eagle Centre and an inter-religious event



TREE PLANTING CEREMONY (17th July 2019) Five Narra saplings were jointly planted by Mr Lawrence Wong, the then Singapore Minister of National Development and Second Minister of Finance and Philippine Ambassador Joseph Del Mar Yap. It marked both countries' advocacy for the protection of the environment and the desire to grow together as friends, neighbours, members of ASEAN and the larger community of nations



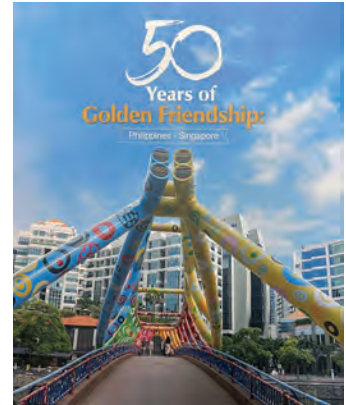
AMBASSADOR'S TOUR OF CEBU AND BOHOL (13-17th Mar 2019) The tour of Cebu and Bohol brought Singaporeans and foreign ambassadors in Singapore together to showcase several key tourist spots of the Philippines



PHILIPPINE EAGLE WILDLIFE LOAN (27th Nov 2019) A pair of Philippine Eagles went officially on display at Jurong Bird Park after the Philippine Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources and Wildlife Reserves Singapore signed the loan agreement.



Partner Philippines



INAUGURATION OF THE RESTORED ALKAFF BRIDGE (12th Jul 2019) The Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro Locsin and Singapore Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan jointly inaugurated the bridge as a symbol of both countries' friendship. The bridge's artwork was by the late Filipina artist Pacita Abad. The picture of the bridge adorns the front cover of the Philippines Embassy's coffetable book 50 Years of Golden Friendship



ART TREK 13 (24th Aug - 30th Sep 2019) The Art Trek series in the centrepiece of the Philippine Embassy's cultural diplomacy programme which features various Filipino artists in Singaporean galleries. The 13th edition had seven galleries and 25 Filipino artists participating and was also the first time that Art Trek also showcased a photo artist and cross-cultural workshop



ANNUAL BAYANIHAN WALK (9th Jun 2019) The annual walk held at Clark Quay attracted many participants including Senior Parliamentary Secretary Low Yen Ling and representatives from other ASEAN embassies

PHILIPPINE MADRIGAL SINGERS (23rd Jun 2-19) A special concert and workshop was held by the popular group as they performed at Singapore's premier art venue - the Esplanade in collaboration with the National Commission for Culture & the Arts



FIRST FIESTA FILIPINO FOOD FESTIVAL (22-30th Jun 2019) Held at the then Mandarin Orchard and organised together with the National Commission for Culture & the Arts and private partners, the inaugural food festival featured Chef Michelle Adrillana



SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY (Mar 2020) The Philippines was hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic but the spirit of solidarity and care prevailed as the Singapore government through the country's Ministry of Health and Temasek Foundation donated high grade hospital equipment, test kits and protective gear to the Philippine government



EVENTS

Africa Day Celebrations 2022 25th May 2022



Africa is represented here by five resident missions from Angola, Egypt, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa

For the first time since the pandemic the African missions in Singapore were able to celebrate the 'live' event of the anniversary of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity

THE African Group in Singapore represented by H.E. Jean de Dieu Uwihanganye, the High Commissioner of Rwanda to Singapore, welcomed more over 100 guests to the African Day Celebrations at the JW Marriot Hotel on Wednesday 25th May 2022. The date commemorates the founding of the Organization of the African Union in 1963 and the African Union in 2002 and charts the progress made by the continent since then to advancing democracy, peace, stability, and socio-economic development.

High Commissioner Uwihanganye welcomed the representative of the Singapore Government Minister of State for National Development and Trade and Industry Mr Koh Poh Koon along with members of the diplomatic corps as well as many executives of major companies, numerous institutional and private investors to the event. His opening comments reflected the main sentiments of everyone there that evening: "Let me start by saying: that I am an optimist about Africa. My optimism does not imply non-awareness of the continent's challenges but stems from a conviction that the best of Africa lies ahead of us."

"Let me start by saying I'm an optimist about Africa. My optimism does not imply non-awareness of the continent's challenges but from a conviction the best of Africa lies ahead of us."



He highlighted how the numbers and statistics certainly backed this up:

- Africa's population is estimated to reach the 1.7 billion mark by 2030, making it the fastest-urbanizing region in the world. The continent at that time will have the



Live performances and a fashion show capped the festivities of the evening

highest number of youth in the world – all brimming with ideas, creativity and skills, which will make the continent the workshop of choice in the world

- It is no coincidence that Africa's recent growth, epitomized by the Africa rising label, was due to increased levels of foreign direct investment. Improvements in fiscal policies, governance and regulatory frameworks and a move to diversify economies away from Africa's traditional commodities-based economies presented greater opportunities for foreign investors

- The African market is open for investment in all sectors of interest, taking into account the advantages derived from its privileged geographical location, its connectivity between countries, like sea, rail, road, and an acceptable telecommunications service

- Africa has fertile land, abundant water resources and a wide range of mineral resources that are still unexploited. More precisely, Africa has 65% of the uncultivated arable land left to feed the world.

Investment Focus

The High Commissioner also touched on how the African market is open for investment in all sectors of interest; many natural resources including fertile land, water and a wide range of mineral resources that are still unexploited; how many entrepreneurs have been making successful private investments in Africa as the world is shifting investment focus to Africa. This included a growing number of Singaporean companies. Currently over 60 Singaporean companies are operating in more than 50 countries in Africa, involved in projects across a wide variety of sectors such as oil & gas, food industry, information technology and others, and more are looking to expand their operations as the continent continues to open its doors to digitalization, economic integration and global trade.

The final part of his speech focussed on the African Continental Free Trade Area, which is one of the flagship projects of the African Union (AU), established in 2018 to create a single market covering trade in goods and services. The agreement connects 1.3 billion people across the continent with a combined GDP estimated at US\$3.4 trillion.

For the full text of the Welcome Address by High Commissioner Uwihanganye and video clip of Minister of State Koh Poh Koon's speech please visit: www.indiplomacy.com

Launch of the Portugese Association 2022 5th May 2022

THE Portuguese speaking community as well as friends of Portugal here can now come together at the first Portugese Association (Singapore) which was officially launched on 5th May 2022 at The Projector theatre. On stage to welcome everyone invited to the event were special guests the Ambassador of Portugal H.E. Mario Miranda Duarte and Singapore's Minister for Transport and in Charge of Trade Relations S Iswaran. The date of the event also nicely coincided with World Portuguese Language Day proclaimed by UNESCO in 2019. Its early days yet but President of the association Mr Nuno Pereira said there is already a programme of regular activities for kids and families drawn up and the association is now waiting for more members to sign up. The initial impetus for creating the association, said Nuno, came from parents who wanted to have their children develop their proficiency in the language and at the same time impart Portugese history and culture. It is now organising events that involve musical performances and outings. For more info: www.portugeseassociationsg.com



15th Arctic Frontiers Conference 2022 8th - 11th May 2022



Special Envoy Sam Tan (far right) in a high-level panel discussion titled "Future Pathways" at 15th Arctic Frontiers Conference

SINGAPORE was represented at the 15th Arctic Frontiers Conference by Special Envoy Mr Sam Tan. The conference was held in Tromsø, Norway and was established in 2006 with the aim of linking policy, business and science for responsible and sustainable development of the Arctic.

Special Envoy Sam Tan participated in the high-level panel discussion titled "Future Pathways," where he spoke about the impact of climate change on the Arctic and ways to mitigate the negative impact while achieving sustainable development, as well as the importance of youth engagement and education in raising awareness on climate and sustainability issues in the region.

Special Envoy Tan also met with Norwegian Senior Arctic Official Morten Høglund; Executive Director of the White House Arctic Executive Steering Committee David Balton; State Department Coordinator for the Arctic Region James DeHart; and President of the Saami Parliament Silje Karine Muotka on the sidelines of the conference to discuss the latest developments in the Arctic.

Going GREEN to Mark Europe Day 9th May 2022



IT was a green Europe Day for the European Union Ambassador to Singapore Iwona Piórko who welcomed the Guest-of-Honour, Minister for Transport and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations S. Iswaran at the Dairy Farm Nature Park on a Monday morning on 9th May 2022. In partnership with NParks, Minister Iswaran, Ambassador Piórko, Ambassadors of EU Member States and Ukraine's Ambassador to Singapore planted trees. They were accompanied by youths as they

commemorated 2022 as the European Year of Youth. As EU Ambassador Piórko explained: "Trees are both about a shared commitment to sustainability and they also symbolise resilience and hope for the future."

The Ambassador went on to say: "9th May is the birthday of our Union. A time for reflection on the future. The importance of working for peace is all the more evident, as we demonstrate our unity and solidarity with Ukraine."





40th UNCLOS Marks Important Moment in International Law

The anniversary of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is especially crucial for small island states like Singapore and was pivotal for multilateralism and the rule of law in the governance of the sea

MINISTER for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan spoke at a high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the adoption of UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This meeting was convened by the President of the 76th Session of the UNGA (PGA) His Excellency Abdulla Shahid.

The meeting underscored the critical importance of UNCLOS which provides a universal legal framework on the governance of the oceans. When UNCLOS was adopted forty years ago, the international community committed itself to the rule of law in the oceans. The institutions created by UNCLOS have adapted to new challenges and made critical contributions to global peace and security. UNCLOS has assumed greater relevance given challenges such as the exponential growth of maritime shipping and the impact of climate change on the oceans.

In his remarks, Minister Balakrishnan emphasised that UNCLOS is especially crucial for Singapore as a small island state whose history, people and economy are intricately intertwined with the seas. Singapore is proud to have contributed to the adoption of UNCLOS in 1982 as Ambassador-at-Large Tommy Koh served as President of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea. At PGA Shahid's invitation, Ambassador Koh delivered a keynote address on the significance of UNCLOS.

Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large Prof Tommy Koh's also presented the Keynote Address in his capacity as President of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea to mark the 40th anniversary of UNCLOS.

For the full transcript of the Joint Statement and the National Statement by Dr Balakrishnan followed by Ambassador Tommy Koh's Keynote Address please visit:
www.indiplomacy.com

UNCLOS is also an Environmental Treaty

"The convention imposes a clear obligation on all States to protect and preserve the marine environment. UNCLOS, I would argue, is one of our most robust environmental treaties. The convention treats the ocean space as an ecological whole and seeks to protect the oceans and the marine environment from all sources of marine pollution. I welcome the recent decision by the UN Environment Assembly to begin negotiating a new treaty on marine plastic pollution.

The convention is a living document and is able to respond to new developments and challenges. I refer to the 1995 Implementation Agreement on Highly Migratory and Straddling Fish Stocks as an example. That agreement fills a gap in the convention and contains new principles of sustainable fishery. If the current negotiations, on the conservation and sustainable use of (marine) biological diversity, in areas beyond national jurisdiction, are successfully concluded, the outcome will be embodied in a new Implementation Agreement, under the convention.

Climate change and sea level rise will impact many aspects of the law of the sea. Sea level rise poses an existential threat to many countries, especially the small island developing countries. The convention contains the legal tools for us to meet this monumental challenge, but States must act and act urgently. The Secretary-General has described the situation as a Code Red for humanity."

Above are extracts from Singapore Ambassador-at-Large Prof Tommy Koh's address at 40th UNCLOS that relate to the environment. The Ambassador was one of the pioneers who contributed to the creation of the Convention and helped steered the early negotiations which brought UNCLOS to life



Singapore's national flower is a hybrid orchid - the Vanda Miss Joaquim

Why Diplomacy Matters

SINGAPORE has more than 70 resident foreign High Commissions and Embassies, 43 Consular Posts and 11 International Organisations. They act as a conduit between Singapore and their respective countries. Diplomatic missions are headed by influential newsmakers who open doors for business, trade, investment, education, the arts and culture. *IN Diplomacy's* mission is to communicate and be a bridge between the diplomatic community and Singaporeans.