

**SPEECH BY PAP ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL, MINISTER FOR  
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND MINISTER-IN-CHARGE OF SOCIAL  
SERVICES INTEGRATION DESMOND LEE FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE PAP  
CLIMATE ACTION GROUP**

**21 JANUARY 2025**

**Dr Koh Poh Koon and Mr Louis Ng, Chairpersons of the PAP Climate Action  
Group,**

**Members of the Climate Action Group Executive Committee,**

**Climate Action Partners and Stakeholders,**

**Friends of the media,**

**Comrades,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good evening,**

**Intro**

1. Last June, Party Sec-Gen, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong announced the establishment of two new groups within the Party, focusing on Climate Change and Mental Health.
2. These groups were formed to address major challenges that Singapore faces – issues that are also among the major priorities for the PAP Government.
3. Today, I am glad to be here to officially launch the PAP Climate Action Group (CAG). This is a reflection of our continued commitment to building a sustainable future for our lion city state, Singapore.

**PAP has long advocated for a green agenda**

4. Environmental sustainability has long been a core part of Singapore's development.
5. Our founding Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, recognised its importance during Singapore's early years.
6. In the 1960s, he launched the first nationwide tree-planting campaign, and introduced his bold vision to transform Singapore into a Garden City.
7. At a time when Singapore was undergoing rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, he tackled pollution proactively.
  - a. He established the Anti-Pollution Unit in 1970, and passed the Clean Air Act in 1971 to curb air pollution from industrial and trade activities.
  - b. In 1977, he spearheaded the cleanup of the Singapore River and Kallang Basin. The cleanup also transformed these waterways into vital water catchments, strengthening Singapore's water resilience.
8. Mr Lee's emphasis on sustainability not only improved quality of life, but also laid the groundwork for Singapore to become a leader in this area.
9. Over the years, we have continued to build on his work and strive for sustainable development.
  - a. For example, we are integrating nature into our urban landscape, and strengthening the connectivity between our green spaces. We are harnessing solar energy by installing solar panels on rooftops and water bodies. All this is being done despite our limited land space.
10. Today, we host key international events on urban solutions, such as the World Cities Summit and the Singapore International Water Week.

11. We also actively contribute to international platforms such as the Conference of the Parties (COP) and G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Ministerial Meeting.

12. Mr Lee sowed the seeds of sustainable development with his foresight, and successive generations have nurtured and cultivated these seeds, driving Singapore towards a more sustainable future. This is imperative for Singapore's survival.

### **PAP's commitment to climate action**

13. In recent years, the PAP has strengthened our efforts to tackle climate change.

- a. Nov 2020: The Young PAP released a position paper with recommendations to make Singapore a green hub.
- b. Jan 2021: Members of the PAP Government Parliamentary Committee for Sustainability and Environment tabled the first-ever motion in Parliament to accelerate and deepen efforts against climate change.
- c. Feb 2021: The Government launched the Singapore Green Plan 2030, outlining Singapore's commitment to a greener and more sustainable future over the next decade.
- d. May 2021: In support of the Singapore Green Plan 2030, all 15 PAP Town Councils launched the Action for Green Towns initiative, to make every PAP-managed town more sustainable.
  - i. To date, our Town Councils have deployed over 100 recycling bins across HDB estates, planted more than 50,000 trees and shrubs, and collected more than 800,000 kg of electronic waste, among other efforts.

e. Jan 2022: The GPC for Sustainability and Environment tabled a second motion asking the Government to explore ways to help Singaporeans transition to a greener future.

f. Mar 2023: MP Louis Ng and MP Nadia Samdin tabled an adjournment motion calling for the protection of our marine spaces and the Southern Islands. I had the privilege of responding to this motion.

14. These are just some of the examples of what the Party has done together with the Government.

**What the PAP CAG will set out to do**

15. As we commemorate SG60 this year, we reflect on the shared values and combined efforts that have brought us to where we are today.

16. Looking ahead, climate change poses an existential threat to Singapore, and will be one of the defining challenges of our time.

17. The PAP Climate Action Group (CAG) is committed to building on Mr Lee's legacy, to tackle climate change and build a greener, more resilient Singapore for future generations to come.

18. Our immediate task will be to engage extensively and effectively with all sectors, tapping into the diverse knowledge and perspectives of subject matter experts and climate activists, listening to the views and concerns of Singaporeans about the impact of climate change, and advocating strongly and passionately for the steps that are needed to be taken together as a nation.

19. Chaired by Dr Koh Poh Koon and Mr Louis Ng, the CAG will be structured into five sub-committees that are aligned with the work of the Singapore Green Plan — City in Nature, Energy Reset/transition, Green Economy, Resilient Future, Sustainable Living — so that we can come up with comprehensive strategies and lock in step with the work of the PAP.

20. And this is an important and collective effort.

21. Many of you here today have championed climate action over the years, and we have had the privilege of working with some of you in different capacities.

22. We want to learn from your diverse knowledge and perspectives, and work together – across businesses, activists, interest groups, individuals as well as the PAP Government – to address climate change.

### **Next steps for the PAP CAG**

23. The PAP CAG is gearing up to table a fourth motion on Climate Change in Parliament.

24. We have existing initiatives, such as the Enterprise Sustainability Programme (ESP), Energy Efficiency Grant (EEG), Enterprise Financing Scheme-Green (EFS-Green), and Refundable Investment Credit (RIC) to support our businesses to adopt sustainable practices.

25. But the CAG members recognise that businesses, particularly SMEs, still face challenges.

26. We understand that this motion that we are working on will seek the call for stronger support to help enterprises navigate the green transition, and ensure a just and inclusive transition towards a low-carbon society.

27. Over the past few months, the CAG has been consulting with business leaders across various sectors, including some of you who are present with us. Co-Chair Louis Ng will also be leading a dialogue this evening to solicit more views. Please share your suggestions with us.

## **Conclusion**

28. This evening marks the beginning of a series of dialogues and programmes on climate action that the CAG will be organising.

29. We invite everyone to participate actively, or become our climate action ambassadors and advocates, to inspire those around you to join in this important effort.

30. This is the heart of #refreshPAP exercise. I hope this will be the start of a strong partnership – one where we work closely, hand in hand, combining our strengths and expertise, our varied expertise, to build a more sustainable future for Singapore, as we celebrate SG60 and beyond.

31. Thank you.