

## **Speech by Mr Desmond Tan, Minister of State for Sustainability and the Environment, at the Second Session of the Stakeholder Engagement for the Lim Chu Kang Master Plan on 31 May 2021**

Good afternoon. I want to thank all of you for taking time to join us at our second stakeholder engagement session for the Lim Chu Kang master plan. Two weeks ago, Minister Grace Fu launched this series of engagement. At the last session, we had nearly a hundred participants representing a wide array of stakeholders, including local farms, Institutes of Higher Learning, agri-tech urban solution providers, nature groups, master planners and members of public. Today we have around 200 participants on this virtual platform. Thank you for your support!

### **Importance of Food Security**

2 Allow me to make three points before we go into our discussions. First, for Singapore, food security is an existential issue. This is the essence of our conversation today. With more than 90 per cent of our food imported, we are vulnerable to disruptions to the global food system. Increasing local production, amongst other strategies, will further strengthen our resilience. The Singapore Food Agency (or SFA) has thus set the target of “30 by 30”, to produce 30 per cent of our nutritional needs locally by 2030. This target is featured in the Singapore Green Plan 2030 launched in February this year and is one of the concrete steps we are taking to enhance our resilience against climate change.

3 In a survey done by SFA earlier this year, 98 per cent of the respondents felt that it was important for Singapore to be able to produce our own food to reduce our reliance on foreign imports. We are making food security our priority, and the Lim Chu Kang that we are here to discuss today is an important part of this journey.

### **Opportunity to harness synergies and further integration**

4 My second point is that Singapore is a small and densely populated country. We will have to manage our limited resources and sometimes make tough decisions to manage the trade-offs. For example, apart from land, we will also consider the water, energy and labour factors in our ambition to grow our agri-food sector. The

fundamental question that we ask ourselves is: “How do we best use our resources in our current context to meet our food security objective?”. We are not starting from scratch, and if we put our heads together, we would be able to find solutions that could allow us to ‘grow more with less’ in a sustainable way.

5 As a start, SFA is embarking on a holistic exercise to transform the Lim Chu Kang farmland into a high-tech agri-food zone that can raise food production in a sustainable and resource-efficient manner. We also envision that by master planning Lim Chu Kang, we can re-parcel existing plots to optimise land use, develop infrastructure to better support farming, and establish common facilities such as waste treatment plants or packing facilities to enable farms to reap economies of scale. We also want to introduce circular economy principles, such that where possible, the by-products of farms can be used as inputs for other parts of the agri-food eco-system. Farms that are involved in upstream or downstream activities from one another can be located close by to benefit from a common eco system and minimise transportation.

6 The farms in Lim Chu Kang can also be carefully developed taking into account the surrounding nature areas and become an attractive destination for education and recreation. We can explore building trails and park connectors to bring people closer to the area and open up the farms and attractions for students and the community. I am sure we all have ideas to make this an exciting place for visitors to enjoy over the weekends.

### **Opportunity for co-solutioning and co-creation**

7 My third and final point is, we want to co-create the Lim Chu Kang agri-food hub with our people. The Lim Chu Kang master plan will be a key milestone in our Singapore Food Story. Beyond food production, we also want to grow other parts of the value chain such as agriculture inputs and logistics. We envisage many possibilities for Singapore to become a strong player in sustainable urban food solutions. Some of these thoughts were echoed in the first session of this engagement series. It was exciting to hear passionate and insightful sharing from participants about Lim Chu Kang becoming an innovative and sustainable agri-tech

cluster that contributes to our food security and a place that Singaporeans can aspire to work and play in.

8 Over the next few months, I hope you can join us in the discussions that my SFA colleagues have organised. A question I hope we can collectively obtain insight on is: “What do we need to prioritise in the development of Lim Chu Kang as Singapore’s core agri-food hub, and what are the trade-offs we may need to make to get there?” Your ideas and feedback will help us flesh out the Lim Chu Kang master plan and help bring it to reality.

9 I would like to conclude by going back to the short film we saw in the beginning. In the film, the boy’s father told him, “You should always dream big and try new things.” Let us dream about how we can feed Singapore in future, and perhaps even dream of a future where Singapore can help feed the world.

10 Thank you.