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Mr Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Conference especially at such a late hour.

With the global population projected at 9.7 billion by 2050, global demand for food will need to grow exponentially, putting food production resources such as land and water under immense strain. Plant and animal diseases, and anti-microbial resistance concerns will also pose significant risks.

Climate change is another global pressure causing great uncertainty to global food supply. Adverse climate change impacts can harm crop yields, destabilise food markets, impact global water supply even as agriculture competes with other needs for water, and further exacerbate the spread of animal and plant diseases and pests. As a small, import-dependent city-state with resource constraints, Singapore is similarly concerned with climate change challenges.

To feed the growing world population in a sustainable manner, food production must be more innovative to achieve quantum leaps in agricultural production and productivity. This is not an easy task and governments cannot do it alone. In this regard, strengthening public-private partnership is critical. Governments will require collaboration and cooperation with all stakeholders.

Within the industry, farmers, food companies, research institutes and institutes of higher learning must also come on board and collaborate with one another, for example via sharing facilities and resources for greater efficiencies and cost-savings. This will be a win-win outcome for all.

In hoping to contribute towards global food security efforts, Singapore is working to realise a vision of a high-tech, innovative, efficient, productive and sustainable agriculture sector, in close consultation with our agriculture industry players, through various work streams such as R&D, knowledge transfer, and funding support for our farmers' adoption of productivity-enhancing technologies and investment in transformational farming systems.

To realize this vision, the Singapore Government has stepped up engagements with farmers who know the issues and challenges best as practitioners on the ground. Earlier this year, we formed an Industry Consultation Panel consisting of government agencies, farmers, and academics to work together to co-create and transform the agricultural sector in Singapore.

With the use of technology such as remote sensors, Information & Communications Technology (ICT), robotics and big data, this allows for higher precision production and increased productivity levels in controlled environments. As technology improves, we see this as becoming a viable means for larger-scale food production, particularly in and around dense urban food markets, and also for building resilience for adaptation to climate change. This will also attract a new generation of youth who will bring with

them various expertise in fields ranging from engineering, computing, marketing, systems design and so on to liven up the agriculture sector.

We also conduct overseas technology sourcing trips to help farmers look for innovative technologies to adopt, technology-matching sessions between farmers and solution providers, and assist farmers with test-bedding of new farming systems.

As Singapore progresses on our farm transformation journey, we look forward to serving as a “living lab” for food production technologies, and to playing a greater role in developing urban farming solutions. In this way, we hope to develop food solutions of benefit internationally, and play our part for global food security.

Thank you very much.