

For Immediate Release

**MINISTER OF STATE KOH POH KOON VISITS URUMQI, CHINA
AND ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN FROM 17 – 22 APRIL 2017**

1. Minister of State for Trade and Industry Dr Koh Poh Koon will be leading a business delegation to Urumqi in Xinjiang, China and Almaty in Kazakhstan from 17 to 22 April 2017, as part of the FutureChina Advanced Leaders Programme (FC-ALP). Jointly organised by Business China and Nanyang Technological University (NTU)'s Nanyang Business School, the FC-ALP aims to study the developments and business prospects in Xinjiang and Kazakhstan, which were named as the core region and key link of the Silk Road Economic Belt respectively.
2. In Xinjiang, Dr Koh will call on the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous (XUAR) Vice Chairman Zhao Chongjiu and Urumqi Executive Vice Mayor Gao Feng. Dr Koh will also deliver a speech at the Xinjiang-Singapore One Belt One Road Business Forum and visit Xinjiang companies such as IPAR Biotech, a high tech biomedical company, and Tebian Electric Apparatus (TBEA), a manufacturer of power transformers and other electrical equipment.
3. In Almaty, the business capital of Kazakhstan, Dr Koh will address Kazakhstan and Singapore businessmen at the Almaty-Singapore Business Forum. He will visit the 490-hectare Almaty Industrial Zone, which houses companies from Kazakhstan's seven key sectors: chemicals, construction, furniture, engineering, food, light manufacturing and pharmaceuticals. He will also visit Kazakhstan's largest greenhouse complex owned by BRB APK LLP, and EFKO Group's edible oils processing plant. Dr Koh will also call on the Mayor of Almaty Bauyrzhan Baibek.
4. Dr Koh said, "With the Belt and Road initiative, Singapore companies can strengthen business partnerships with Chinese and Kazakhstan companies. This visit has provided us with useful insights into the logistics and transportation linkages in the region. Given the pace of economic growth and infrastructure development in Xinjiang and Kazakhstan, there are good opportunities for Singapore companies to expand their business in these emerging markets."
5. Dr Koh will be accompanied by Minister of State for Communications and Information and Health Mr Chee Hong Tat, Chairman of Business China Mr Lee Yi Shyan, officials from the Ministry of Trade and Industry and International Enterprise (IE) Singapore, representatives from Business China and NTU and Singapore companies from the agri-business, construction, education, energy, finance, manufacturing and real estate sectors.

Annex A – Factsheet on economic relations between Singapore and Xinjiang
Annex B – Factsheet on economic relations between Singapore and Kazakhstan

Ministry of Trade and Industry
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Annex A - Factsheet on Economic Relations between Singapore and Xinjiang

Trade and Economic Relations

1. In 2016, bilateral trade in goods between Singapore and Xinjiang amounted to US\$0.42 million. Exports to Xinjiang amounted to US\$0.06 million while imports from Xinjiang totaled US\$0.36 million¹.

2. There are opportunities for Singapore companies in Xinjiang in sectors such as food manufacturing and processing, retail and early childhood education. To date, Singapore has 11 projects in Xinjiang. Key companies operating in Xinjiang include Wilmar International who has joint ventures in oil and grains with local partners, and BreadTalk, which manages 25 outlets on a franchise model.

¹ Xinjiang Bureau of Commerce.

Annex B – Factsheet on economic relations between Singapore and Kazakhstan

Trade and Economic Relations

1. In 2016, bilateral trade in goods between Singapore and Kazakhstan amounted to S\$23.5 million. Exports to Kazakhstan amounted to S\$18.7 million, comprising mainly lubricating oil, magnetic stripe cards and floating docks. Imports from Kazakhstan totalled S\$4.9 million mainly in petroleum oils, unwrought zinc alloys and chromium trioxide.
2. Kazakhstan presents opportunities for Singapore companies in a range of sectors such as education, oil and gas, engineering, urban solutions and master-planning. According to public records, there are 16 Singapore companies set up in Kazakhstan. These include Educare, which provides training and teaching workshops to Kazakh educators supported by Temasek Foundation, and Surbana Jurong, which has completed master planning projects in Kazakhstan.

Bilateral Agreements

3. Singapore has an existing Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement (DTA) with Kazakhstan. The DTA was signed in September 2006 and came into force in August 2007.
4. A Joint Feasibility Study (JFS) on the benefits of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Singapore and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), of which Kazakhstan is a member, was launched in October 2016. Negotiations on the EAEU-Singapore FTA are targeted to be launched shortly after the completion of the JFS.