

For immediate release

**SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY
DR KOH POH KOON VISITS KAZAKHSTAN AND UZBEKISTAN**

1. Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry Dr Koh Poh Koon made an official visit to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan from 3 to 8 February 2020. The visit reaffirms Singapore's warm ties with countries in the Central Asian region.
2. Dr Koh said, "There is growing economic opportunity in Central Asia for our companies. Both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have promising logistics, transportation, commodity trading and tourism sectors. They are also geographically well-placed to more closely link the Central Asian and Southeast Asian regions. Singapore signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) last year, of which Kazakhstan is a member. This was a key milestone. The FTA lays the groundwork for companies to expand operations in our respective regions. Singapore and Kazakhstan are committed to concluding the remaining Services & Investment Agreement that will be incorporated into the FTA. We look forward to more economic activity between Singapore, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the rest of Central Asia and EAEU in the future."
3. In Kazakhstan, Dr Koh met with Minister for Trade and Integration Bakhyt Sultanov, Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Beibut Atamkulov, Minister of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry Askar Zhumagaliyev and Chairman of the Management Board of Astana International Financial Centre Nurlan Kassainov. Dr Koh and the representatives discussed opportunities to strengthen economic relations between Singapore and Kazakhstan. They also affirmed the importance of the Chongqing Connectivity Initiative-International Land-Sea Trade Corridor (CCI-ILSTC) in promoting greater linkages and boosting bilateral trade flows.
4. In Uzbekistan, Dr Koh met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Jamshid Kuchkarov, Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Sardor Umurzakov, Vice Minister of Energy Jarebek Mirzamahmudov and First Deputy Chairman of the Senate of Uzbekistan Sodiq Safayev. Dr Koh and the representatives discussed ways to enhance trade and tourism flows, including initiatives to identify and nurture potential business partnerships and networks for our companies and increasing air connectivity between both countries. They also spoke about exploring opportunities and enhancing bilateral economic ties through the CCI-ILSTC.
5. While in Uzbekistan, Dr Koh visited Syrdarya Textile Facility to better understand the business opportunities for Singapore companies in Uzbekistan. Dr Koh also visited important cultural sites with great tourism potential in Samarkand, such as the Registan, Gur Amir Masoleum and Ulugbek Observatory.

6. Dr Koh was accompanied by Non-Resident Ambassador to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan Zulkifli Baharudin and officials from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Enterprise Singapore.

Annex: Photos and captions

**MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
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Annex: Photos and captions



Caption: Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry Dr Koh Poh Koon called on Kazakhstan Minister for Trade and Integration Bakhyt Sultanov



Caption: Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry Dr Koh Poh Koon called on Uzbekistan Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Jamshid Kuchkarov