

Embargoed until 25 March 2020, 12.00pm (SG Time)

**JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY AUSTRALIA, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM,
CANADA, CHILE, THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR, NEW
ZEALAND AND SINGAPORE AFFIRMING COMMITMENT TO ENSURING
SUPPLY CHAIN CONNECTIVITY AMIDST THE COVID-19 SITUATION**

1. The COVID-19 pandemic is a serious global crisis. As part of our collective response to combat COVID-19, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, New Zealand and Singapore are committed to maintaining open and connected supply chains. We will also work closely to identify and address trade disruptions with ramifications on the flow of necessities.
2. We recognise that it is in our mutual interest to ensure that trade lines remain open, including via air and sea freight, to facilitate the flow of goods including essential supplies.
3. We affirm the importance of refraining from the imposition of export controls or tariffs and non-tariff barriers and of removing any existing trade restrictive measures on essential goods, especially medical supplies, at this time.
4. We are committed to working with all like-minded countries to ensure that trade continues to flow unimpeded, and that critical infrastructure such as our air and seaports remain open to support the viability and integrity of supply chains globally.

**MINISTER FOR TRADE, TOURISM AND INVESTMENT, AUSTRALIA, SENATOR
THE HON SIMON BIRMINGHAM**

**MINISTER AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND MINISTER OF FINANCE AND
ECONOMY II, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM, HON DATO DR AMIN LIEW ABDULLAH**

**MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS, EXPORT PROMOTION AND INTERNATIONAL
TRADE, CANADA, HON MARY NG**

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CHILE, TEODORO RIBERA

**UNION MINISTER FOR INVESTMENT AND FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS,
THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR, THAUNGTUN**

**MINISTER FOR TRADE AND EXPORT GROWTH, NEW ZEALAND, HON DAVID
PARKER**

MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, SINGAPORE, HON CHAN CHUN SING

Annex: Background information on Singapore's efforts on a Joint Ministerial Statement to Uphold Supply Chain Connectivity Amidst the COVID-19 Situation

25 March 2020

For media queries, please contact:

Janice Ong

Senior Assistant Director, Corporate Communications Division

Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore

Hp: +65 97551597

Email: Janice_ONG@mti.gov.sg

Annex: Background information on Singapore's efforts on a Joint Ministerial Statement to Uphold Supply Chain Connectivity Amidst the COVID-19 Situation

[To be attributed to a Spokesperson from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore]

1. The COVID-19 pandemic is a serious global crisis, which has impacted trade flows and connectivity.
 - There has been a sharp drop in airfreight capacity in the wake of flight cancellations and reduced connectivity. Airfreight charges have correspondingly become volatile, rising multiple times.
 - Globally, some seaports have had restrictions imposed, and indeed have suspended port operations. Globally, there have also been some disruptions to land transport due to enhanced border controls.
2. Singapore firmly supports measures to contain and deal with COVID-19. In the process, countries should also uphold trade connectivity amidst the challenging circumstances. This is a critical pillar in our ability to respond effectively and efficiently to the COVID-19 situation.
 - For example, the production of medical equipment often involves supply chains that straddle multiple countries.
 - We must ensure that component and raw materials can flow unimpeded and efficiently, so that global supplies of essential goods can be continually replenished.
3. Singapore is committed to working with like-minded partners to maintain open and connected supply chains, as part of our collective international response to COVID-19.
4. Singapore had initiated and worked with New Zealand on a joint Ministerial statement, which was issued on 20 March 2020. The statement affirmed our shared commitment to upholding trade and supply chain connectivity.
5. Singapore, New Zealand and Chile have since worked with additional like-minded countries on a plurilateral statement affirming our intent to facilitate trade flows, especially in essential supplies, and refrain from trade restrictions during this time.
6. The joint announcement seeks to be a timely and reassuring signal internationally and domestically. It is intended to be an open and inclusive statement, and Singapore welcomes other like-minded partners to join our continued efforts on this front.

7. Singapore hopes that the statement will also catalyse concrete outcomes among the participating countries, such as refraining from imposing export controls, as well as identifying and addressing trade disruptions, especially in essential goods.