

WELCOME REMARKS BY MR CHEE WEE KIONG, SECOND PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SINGAPORE, AT THE 12TH INTERNATIONAL EXPORT CONTROL CONFERENCE, 24-27 MAY 2011, SINGAPORE

Ambassador. David Adelman of the United States,

Ambassador. Marc Ungeheuer, Head of the European Delegation to Singapore,

Mr. Vann Van Diepen, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation;

Dr. Arnold Wallraff, President of the German Federal Office of Economics and Export Control,

Mr. Fong Yong Kian, Director-General, Singapore Customs

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Singapore is honoured to join the United States and the European Union in co-sponsoring the 12th International Export Control Conference.
- We are very pleased to be the first country in Asia to host the Conference. This is part of our commitment to the international effort to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and demonstrates the importance we place on upholding the international treaties and UN Security Council resolutions on non-proliferation.
- Singapore was one of the first countries in the region to establish an export control regime in 2003. We have over the years improved and strengthened our framework. In the course of the discussions over the next few days, we would be happy to share our experiences and the challenges we faced. We also look forward to learning from others and exploring how we can better cooperate with one another to advance our common goals.

- I would like to share a few thoughts on export controls from the perspective of an Asian country.
- First of all, the fact that almost all the countries from the region are here today attests to our sense of shared responsibility in wanting to prevent the unlawful acquisition of the means and know-how to produce weapons of mass destruction. A peaceful and secure world is imperative to continued economic growth in the region. Promoting the effective and rigorous implementation of our collective treaty and UNSC obligations is an important national interest for a small country like Singapore, which is particularly vulnerable to asymmetric weapons especially in the hands of rogue countries and terrorists. Even if an attack does not happen in Singapore, no country and no region can completely insulate itself from the repercussions of such an attack somewhere else. Globalisation, while fuelling Asia's economic growth, has also increased the interlinkages among us.
- Unfortunately, proliferators are also quick to take advantage of these interlinkages to carry out their activities and circumvent UN sanctions. They are creative and inventive in exploiting the complex logistical network that facilitates our inter- and intra-regional trade. Using deceptive practices to evade detection, they can slip through national export control regimes.
- Asia is home to many of the world's busiest ports such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Busan and Yokohama. In addition to these major ports, there is a growing network of primary and secondary feeder ports in the region which link up with the larger ports. Our aim should be for each of these ports along the entire supply chain, whether large or small, feeder ports or ports of origin, to be secured with similar robust export controls. Afterall, efforts to curb proliferation can only be as strong as the weakest link.
- Second, implementing and maintaining export controls require significant investment of resources. For example, it is expensive to install sophisticated technology and equipment and train people to use them. It can be an onerous strain on the limited resources of some countries. International cooperation and provision of technical assistance are therefore important to help these countries plug the gaps and eradicate the weak links. Major ports too face different challenges such as high volume, rapid turnaround of cargo and tight deadlines. Disruptions are costly and

can result in law suits. Access to technologies is therefore crucial to develop practical and effective solutions to overcome these challenges.

- Third, export controls should be supplemented with other measures such as risk assessment and information sharing among countries. Our experience has shown that targeted checks supported by reliable and timely intelligence, have been effective in rooting out illicit shipments.
- Finally, our counter-proliferation efforts must be balanced against the need for unimpeded flow of legitimate trade. We should not lose sight of the fact that the bulk of international trade is legitimate. Measures that disrupt or slow down trade will only weaken the ability and resolve of countries who are our important partners in the fight against proliferation.
- In conclusion, let me say that countries in Asia have an interest in showing that the region will not tolerate being used as a safe haven for proliferators. I am confident that the discussion and outcome of this conference will bear this out.
- I wish all of you an enjoyable and fruitful stay in Singapore.
- Thank you.

.