

Statements from Rovaniemi 2018 Observer Special Session: Observer States

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**OBSERVERS' SPECIAL SESSION, SENIOR ARCTIC OFFICIALS'
MEETING, ROVANIEMI, FINLAND**

2 NOVEMBER 2018

Good afternoon. I would like to thank the Finnish Arctic Council Chairmanship for giving Observers an opportunity to give an update on our contributions to the Arctic Council's very important work. We have been asked to focus our remarks on our contributions to preserving the Arctic's biodiversity,

We are pleased to update that Singapore participated actively in the development of the Polar Code to reduce maritime environmental pollution in Arctic (and Antarctic) waters. Recently, to create more awareness of clean and green shipping, we partnered Norway for an Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Conference on "Green Shipping" in Singapore in April 2018. Singapore also contributes to various working groups such as the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) and the Protection of Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) to exchange knowledge on controlling oil spills and plastic pollution.

One area we would like to highlight is our efforts to protect the habitats of Arctic Migratory birds. In Singapore alone, we have recorded over 30 species of Arctic migratory birds that make their annual 'winter holidays' to Singapore's Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserves. The Wetland Reserves serves as a safe haven for these shorebirds, whose habitats elsewhere have become increasingly threatened by urban development.

We were happy that the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI) Workshop in Singapore that we facilitated last year attracted over 80 participants from 20 different countries. This shows that there is significant interest in the conservation of Arctic migratory birds in the region. More recently, Singapore

led the establishment of the ASEAN Network on Wetlands and Migratory Waterbirds Conservation as part of the outcome of the AMBI Workplan 2015-2019.

We have started to track these birds using radio trackers, and more recently, satellite transmitters. Having real-time data on migratory birds can help conservationists fine-tune their strategies. Using the data, we realized that the migratory shorebirds not only visit Sungei Buloh, but also the nearby mangroves which serves as a rich feeding ground for the shorebirds. We have thus designated these mangroves as a Nature Park last month to protect these important habitats.

We are honoured that the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) chose Singapore to host a coordinator to further the biodiversity conservation efforts along the East Asia-Australasia Flyway (EAAF). As Vice-Chair of the EAAF and lead of the ASEAN Network on Wetlands and Migratory Waterbirds Conservation, we look forward to continue to work with CAFF. Similar to Swedish SAO remarks on wetlands reserves yesterday, there is some potential to work on this.

Singapore sees our contributions as contributing towards our collective efforts to preserving the biodiversity and the fragile ecosystem of the Arctic. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the Arctic Council in this and other areas as well. Thank you.
