



WELCOME REMARKS BY MR LAWRENCE WONG, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER & MINISTER FOR FINANCE AT THE 4TH SINGAPORE-SHANGHAI COMPREHENSIVE COOPERATION COUNCIL (SSCCC) MEETING ON 24 APRIL 2023

尊敬的龚正市长，
华源副市长，
各位来宾，
女士们、先生们

大家下午好！

1. 欢迎各位参加新加坡-上海市全面合作理事会第四次会议。我很高兴能够参加本次会议的开场环节。
2. 今天的会议不但重要，而且非常有意义。那是因为：
 - a. 这是自新冠疫情以来，首次以线下的方式召开的经贸理事会
 - b. 也是首次在新加坡举办的沪新全面合作理事会
 - c. 并且这也是自新中两国最近升级双边关系后，首次召开的经贸理事会
3. 因此，我热烈欢迎我们上海的朋友这次到访新加坡。接下来，我会以英语发言。
4. I am very happy to have Mayor Gong and his delegation here in Singapore for this 4th Singapore Shanghai Comprehensive Cooperation Council (SSCCC).
5. Singapore has several provincial-level cooperation councils with China. Shanghai is our latest council, formed in 2019. While the Council itself is relatively new, the ties between Singapore and Shanghai are longstanding. Over the years, we have built close economic cooperation and people-to-people relations. Shanghai is the key port-of-call for Singapore companies that are keen to expand their footprint in China, while Singapore is a natural springboard for Shanghai companies seeking to tap on the growing opportunities in Southeast Asia.

6. Since its establishment in 2019, the SSCCC has served as an important platform in catalyzing deeper collaborations – not just between Singapore and Shanghai, but also between Singapore and the broader Yangtze River Delta (YRD) region.

7. I took over as co-chair of the Council in August 2019. In the last 3 years, we were not able to have any face-to-face meetings because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But I'm glad to have the chance to engage Mayor Gong several times virtually.

8. I've always enjoyed these exchanges with Mayor Gong and his delegation, and the opportunities to learn from one another, including how we manage the pandemic, and continue to strengthen our economic ties. Indeed, in our last virtual meeting, we had enhanced our partnership in financial services and innovation, and initiated new collaboration in digital economy. Since then, both sides have worked very hard to yield more good outcomes across various fields, and to build even stronger foundations for deeper mutual cooperation ahead. So I want to thank Mayor Gong for his personal commitment and attention to strengthening the relationship between Shanghai and Singapore.

9. With the worst of the pandemic behind us, I had originally thought we might have the chance to co-chair the next council meeting together. But with my additional responsibilities, I am unfortunately unable to continue as co-chair of the council. So I thought the least I could do today was to join you at the beginning of your council meeting – to thank everyone here including our friends from the corporate sector from both sides for your support, and importantly, to ensure a proper handover to my successor. And on this note I would like to introduce the new Singapore SSCCC Co-Chairman, Mr Edwin Tong, who is also the Minister for Culture, Community & Youth, and the Second Minister for Law in Singapore.

10. Minister Tong is no stranger to the SSCCC. He was the Vice Co-Chairman of the 1st SSCCC in 2019 and is familiar with the priorities and directions established under the council. He also oversees our countries' bilateral legal cooperation, which dovetails with a key agenda in Singapore-Shanghai collaboration. Of course, Minister of State Low Yen Ling will continue as Vice Co-Chair on the Singapore side, together with Vice Mayor Hua Yuan. I am confident that under the Co-Chairmanship of Mayor Gong and Minister Tong, together with their respective Vice Co-Chairs, the SSCCC will continue to foster meaningful collaborations, and help Singapore-Shanghai relations reach new heights.

11. I am also confident that Singapore and Shanghai relations will be a key pillar in the bilateral relationship between China and Singapore.

12. Our two countries enjoy longstanding and multi-faceted relations, characterised by mutually beneficial cooperation and very close people-to-people ties. Over the years, our bilateral relations have progressed well and in line with our respective strengths and development priorities.

13. Last month, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited China and met with President Xi Jinping in Beijing. Both leaders reaffirmed the strong ties between Singapore and China, and agreed to upgrade our bilateral relations to an “All-Round High-Quality Future-Oriented Partnership” (全方位高质量的前瞻性伙伴关系).

14. Through this upgraded partnership, both sides are committed to continually expand bilateral cooperation, and pursue collaboration in forward-looking areas like the digital and green economies. So I encourage the Council to study and pursue new cooperation projects that will add more substance, and reflect the intent and spirit of our upgraded partnership.

15. Finally, I thank Mayor Gong and our Shanghai friends for your unwavering friendship and strong support over the years. I may no longer be on the Council, but I will continue to find opportunities to visit Shanghai, and will support your efforts in whatever way I can. I wish everyone a fruitful meeting, and our friends from Shanghai an enjoyable and rewarding stay in Singapore. Thank you.