MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY SINGAPORE

PRESS RELEASE

SINGAPORE WELCOMES US ANNOUNCEMENT TO ENGAGE THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Singapore welcomes the announcement by US President Barack Obama in Tokyo this morning that the US will engage the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPP) partners. With this commitment from the US, the TPP now has the potential to expand to a 8-member grouping with Australia, Peru, US and Vietnam joining the original four members, Brunei, Chile, New Zealand and Singapore. Singapore looks forward to working with the TPP countries in developing a high quality 21st century trade agreement that meets the needs of modern businesses and which allows at the same time for the TPP to grow into a larger agreement with a broad based membership across the Asia Pacific.

2 The TPP came into force in 2006, and was conceived as a pathway to trade liberalisation across the wider Asia-Pacific region. It is today the only regional free trade agreement that spans both sides of the Pacific, linking Asia with the Americas. Open to accession by other like-minded economies, the TPP is a potential building block for a larger Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP). Leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) grouping endorsed FTAAP in 2006 as a long-term prospect for the region. The expansion of the TPP to include other APEC members will place renewed focus on regional economic integration. It will also give a strong boost to the trade liberalisation agenda.

3 Singapore’s Trade and Industry Minister, Lim Hng Kiang said: “The announcement by the US to engage the TPP partners sends a strong message of US economic engagement with the Asia-Pacific. It also presents us with a good opportunity to shape a high quality Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that can be the nucleus of a future FTAAP. A region-wide FTA like the TPP can also help to streamline the wide network of bilateral and plurilateral FTAs and help to reduce compliance costs for businesses. We will work to make this a future-oriented business-friendly FTA”.

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