

## JOINT STATEMENT

### COSTA RICA AND SINGAPORE TO NEGOTIATE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

1. On the sidelines of the official visit of Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica to Singapore from 1 to 4 December, 2008, Costa Rica and Singapore announced their intent to launch negotiations for a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

2. Singapore and Costa Rica share a growing bilateral economic relationship. In 2007, Costa Rica was Singapore's seventh largest Latin American trading partner, and the total trade volume between the two countries stood at \$372.9 million. From January to October 2008, total bilateral trade amounted to S\$348.2 million, a 14.4% increase over the same period in 2007.

3. The launch of an FTA is testament to the growing economic relations between the two countries. The FTA will increase bilateral trade and investment, and provide greater confidence for investors and businesses in both countries. Key elements of the FTA will include measures to liberalise trade in goods and services and the investment regime, simplify customs procedures, open up government procurement, and other general provisions. The FTA will also lay a strong foundation for cooperation in other areas of mutual interest.

4. To ensure a smooth and expeditious conclusion of the FTA, the two countries will adopt a pragmatic approach. In this regard, we have agreed to use an FTA that Singapore has with other Latin American countries as a basis for negotiations. Where appropriate, we will also harness the use of technology as a means to advance in the negotiations.

5. Both countries will also continue to work together in support of a prompt conclusion of the Doha Round, and achieve comprehensive and ambitious results that truly contribute to greater liberalization of world trade.

6. In addition, both countries will keep promoting increased trade and investment ties between the private sectors in both countries, as a means of supporting economic growth and the development of projects of mutual interest.

**MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, SINGAPORE**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE, COSTA RICA**

**2 DECEMBER 2008**