



GLOBAL COOLING PLEDGE ASSEMBLY

SINGAPORE 15-18 SEPTEMBER 2026



High-level Opening

H.E. Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment

1. Good morning, and a warm welcome to Singapore for the inaugural Global Cooling Pledge Assembly. At Belém last year, I announced that Singapore would host this gathering. Today, that commitment has become a reality—because each of you has chosen to help turn ambition into action.
2. Singapore is honoured to co-host this Assembly with the UN Environment Programme and the Cool Coalition. It is also the first time they are convening a meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee on Cooling focal points, together with a study visit. More than 230 leaders from government, academia and business, representing over 60 countries, are here to move from goals to practical action.
3. Over the past two days, delegates have explored how sustainable cooling and heat-resilience solutions can work in dense cities—through roundtables, training and site visits. Over the next two days, we will review progress, share practical strategies and identify how to accelerate implementation.

Effects of Extreme Heat

4. This Assembly comes at a pivotal moment. Around the world, extreme climate and weather events are becoming more severe—from a near-record-breaking El Niño and intense heatwaves to longer dry spells.
5. Asia is warming nearly twice as fast as the global average. Singapore's latest climate projections show that annual mean temperatures could rise by up to 5°C by the end of this century, bringing more very hot days, warmer nights and frequent periods of high heat stress.
6. As temperatures rise, so will demand for cooling. Cooling already accounts for about 20% of global electricity use, and demand is expected to more than triple by 2050.
7. The challenge is clear: we must expand access to cooling without driving up emissions and energy demand. I will focus on three priorities—planning, policy and partnerships.

First: Plan for Adaptation



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8. First, effective adaptation starts with good planning. In Singapore, our plans are grounded in science and data, and tailored to local conditions, because they directly affect our people, infrastructure and economy.
9. That requires strong climate science, modelling and research. We established the Centre for Climate Research Singapore in 2013 to deepen our understanding of tropical climates and their effects on Singapore and the region. Its Third National Climate Change Study, released in 2024, provides high-resolution projections for temperature, weather and sea levels across Singapore and Southeast Asia.
10. For heat resilience, we launched a dedicated research and development programme, including the S\$40 million “Adapting to Heat Impacts” initiative. It will deepen our understanding of climate and heat risks, and support guidelines and solutions for vulnerable groups.
11. The next step is to translate that evidence into adaptation measures suited to local conditions—while keeping cooling sustainable.
12. In Singapore, we design heat resilience into the built environment. We use passive and hybrid cooling, add greenery, optimise wind flow and shade in new developments, and expand shaded public spaces and covered walkways.
13. When planning towns and neighbourhoods, we increasingly use environmental modelling to optimise factors such as wind flow and create more comfortable, climate-responsive communities.
14. We also plan at the district level to improve building energy efficiency. Some of you visited Punggol Digital District yesterday. It combines passive design with smart cooling, using advanced simulations to maximise ventilation and reduce solar heat gain. Its centralised district cooling system is 30% more energy efficient than conventional individual systems.

Second: Support Planning with Policy

15. Second, planning must be backed by policy and legislation so that solutions can be implemented at scale.
16. In Singapore, sustainable cooling requirements are built into our rules. For example, non-air-conditioned indoor spaces must meet minimum natural ventilation standards to maximise airflow. Our Green Mark Certification Scheme also encourages developers to adopt natural ventilation measures.



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17. Policy must also improve the energy efficiency of the appliances we use—especially in households, where cooling demand is rising with the heat.
18. Our Minimum Energy Performance Standards cover common, energy-intensive household appliances such as air-conditioners. Mandatory energy labels help consumers compare efficiency and make informed choices. Since these schemes were introduced, the average energy efficiency of air-conditioners has improved by more than 60%.
19. At the same time, cooling must remain accessible so communities are protected from heat-related risks. During a heatwave, Singapore will open more than 300 cooling centres islandwide, using community spaces such as Residents' Network Centres and indoor sports halls. These air-conditioned spaces will give residents convenient places to seek relief from extreme heat.

Third: Build Strong Partnerships

20. Third, we must strengthen partnerships across government, business and the community. Heat affects public health, increases the risks of heat-related and infectious diseases, puts vulnerable groups at greater risk, and disrupts business operations. No single agency or sector can address these effects alone. We must act together to protect our people, society and economy.
21. One example is the Heat Resilience Policy Office, which coordinates efforts across government and supports a national action plan spanning infrastructure, health, economic and social needs.
22. Businesses are also stepping forward. Some of you visited Sentosa yesterday. Under its cooling roadmap, Sentosa Development Corporation announced in October 2025 that it would establish 10 cool nodes across the island resort to help visitors cope with the heat. These complement existing measures such as misting sprays, cooler pavements and green roofs.

Closing and Call to Action

23. At a time of geopolitical tension and shifting global priorities, international cooperation on cooling matters more—not less. Now is the time to turn the Global Cooling Pledge into action.



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24. I have highlighted three priorities: plan with evidence, enable action through policy, and build partnerships that deliver. Over the next two days, let us form new partnerships, test practical solutions and commit to implementation.
25. If we combine our expertise, resources and resolve, we can make sustainable cooling a reality—and build a cooler, safer and more resilient future for all.
26. I wish you a productive Assembly. Thank you.