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## ESM GOH MEETS KAZAKHSTAN PRIME MINISTER; REAFFIRMS TIES

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SINGAPORE: Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong reaffirmed his Singapore's commitment to strengthening bilateral and economic cooperation with Kazakhstan as he met Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev during an official visit to the country on Monday (26 Sep).

In a press statement on Tuesday, Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) added that Mr Goh also thanked Mr Sagintayev for Kazakhstan's proactive support for the proposed Singapore-Eurasian Economic Union Free Trade Agreement.

In addition, Mr Goh was briefed on Kazakhstan's EXPO 2017 with its theme of Future Energy. Singapore will be participating in the event, which will take place from Jun 10 to Sep 10 in Kazakh capital Astana next year, said MFA.

On Tuesday, Mr Goh met with and was hosted to lunch by the Chairman of the Senate of Parliament Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Mr Goh discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation between Singapore and Kazakhstan, particularly in the areas of education, economy and public administration.

Mr Goh also addressed members of the Kazakh Senate, telling them he was impressed by what he saw in Astana. The palpable vibrancy of the city reflects the vision of the Kazakh leadership in building an advanced and prosperous country in the heart of Eurasia.

Congratulating Kazakhstan on its 25th anniversary, Mr Goh said: Kazakhstan is a young country with an exciting future.

He also touched on bilateral cooperation. Our two countries can explore collaboration to maximise each others strengths as hubs in their respective regions, said Mr Goh.

He said Singapore seeks to strengthen economic relations with Kazakhstan through the Bilateral Investment Treaty and a free-trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union.

Beyond Singaporean companies investing in Kazakhstan, we should also explore ways to leverage Singapore's reputation as an international financial centre, and encourage other Asian corporations to bring investments into Kazakhstan through Singapore, he added.

Mr Goh also said that there was "definite potential" for Singapore to work together with Kazakhstan in Central Asia on the One Belt One Road initiative. "Both Singapore and Kazakhstan are key nodes on the New Silk Road, he said.

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