

Singapore believes in fair, equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines: Vivian



Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said that fair distribution of vaccines is essential for global recovery. PHOTO: AFP



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SINGAPORE - The coronavirus pandemic has illustrated the urgent need for global cooperation on healthcare and vaccine distribution, and Singapore, as a strong supporter of vaccine multilateralism, believes in the fair and equitable distribution of vaccines, Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said on Wednesday (June 23).

He was speaking at the Asia and Pacific High-Level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation, a videoconference chaired by his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi. It was attended by representatives from 29 countries and institutions such as the Eurasian Economic Union.

In his remarks, Dr Balakrishnan stressed Singapore's commitment to tackling the Covid-19 pandemic and future global health threats through international cooperation and said that fair distribution of vaccines is essential for global recovery.

The Republic has also begun discussing with many partners, including China, the mutual recognition of health certificates to facilitate the safe resumption of travel, which he said is essential for a sustainable global recovery.

Advancing economic integration and connectivity is also key, Dr Balakrishnan added, noting that having stable and resilient supply chains is important for ensuring the continued flow of essential goods and medical supplies.

He mentioned that the China-Singapore (Chongqing) Connectivity Initiative-New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor - a link between South-east Asia and Western China - has proven to be a viable and effective alternative trade route.

"Despite the pandemic, this route has seen a 30 per cent year-on-year increase in cargo flows last year... It is well-positioned to further enhance connectivity across and beyond the Belt and Road," said the minister.

He also noted that the Belt and Road Initiative has fostered stronger cooperation between Singapore and China in areas such as financial connectivity, third-party collaborations and professional services, including legal and judicial cooperation.

Finally, Dr Balakrishnan urged participants not to lose sight of the existential threat of climate change, noting that Singapore is a strong advocate for the Paris Agreement, a global treaty to tackle climate change.

"The Paris Agreement was a key result of great collaboration among the United States, China, Europe, and the rest of the world. We believe that all of us need to seize the opportunity presented by Covid-19 to make a global reset to achieve a more sustainable future," he said.

He added that Singapore has recently unveiled the Singapore Green Plan 2030, which outlines a whole-of-nation approach to sustainable development.

Singapore, as co-chair of the Belt and Road Initiative International Green Development Coalition, also believes that there are many opportunities for partners to work constructively together on innovative and sustainable solutions, he added.

"The decisions we make on green recovery today will have profound long-term implications on future generations," said Dr Balakrishnan.

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