





# FOREWORD

It has been my pleasure to read this beautifully produced book on the weather and climate of Singapore. In the book, we find descriptions of weather phenomena, useful local climate statistics and explanations of the art and science of weather observation and prediction. This book will certainly be welcomed by the Singapore public who has been intrigued by reports of “Sumatras”, monsoon surges, El Niño, global warming, etc., and wishes to learn more about them.

In a way, Singapore has been very lucky with weather and climate. We are not threatened by ravaging storms, severe cold, prolonged drought, or any really disastrous weather or climate. As quoted in the book, Rev. R. B. Raffles, cousin of Singapore’s founder, observed: *“Singapore enjoys an equable and smiling climate, in which the temperature ranges from 70-90 degrees Fahrenheit, the night-time is cool, and the rain falls gently and throughout the year.”* It is understandable that Singaporeans in general may not feel the need to be too concerned about weather and climate.

It is, however, important to realise that the Earth is a very special place. It is a rare “blue planet” where conditions are just right for life to emerge, evolve and flourish. That said, we must also note that the Earth’s climate is capable of large changes. At the peak of the last ice age about 20,000 years ago, the sea level was 140 metres lower than it is today. As the ice melted, the sea level rose rapidly at about 1 metre per century, until about 6,000 years ago. Fortunately, the sea stopped rising and the climate stabilised. Human civilisations blossomed around that time in different parts of the world, and developed to the modern world through a period of generally benign climate.

The world is now becoming aware of the serious threat of climate change, most probably caused by our own excessive exploitation of resources. Evidence shows that the stable climate we have enjoyed for thousands of years has begun to shift. It is hoped that the world’s nations will be able to put aside their differences and mount a concerted effort in addressing this common threat, before the Earth’s climate is pushed into an irreversible change of course.

I wish to congratulate the Meteorological Service Singapore on the timely publication of this useful and educational book on Singapore’s weather and climate.

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