



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

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**Consideration of reports submitted by States
parties under Article 44 of the Convention**

Sixth periodic report of States parties due in 2024

Singapore



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Foreword

Our children are precious. They are our future. This is why we have built a Singapore that is a great place for our children to grow and thrive in. The National Council of Social Services (NCSS)'s study on the Quality of Life of Children and Youth (published 2022) found that children in Singapore enjoy a comparable quality of life relative to their peers in developed nations.

Fundamentally, we do this through building strong families, because we believe this nurtures children to become strong individuals. For example, Singapore dedicated 2022 as the Year of Celebrating Singapore Families to encourage families to spend more time together, and to enable them to build strong bonds. We also continue to celebrate the importance of families and enhance the ecosystem of support for families with our community partners, under 'A Singapore Made for Families' plan.

We are dedicated to our children's well-being and physical safety, and this is demonstrated in our laws, policies and practices. Singapore ranked third in the 2021 Safe Cities index which measures countries' digital, health, infrastructure, personal and environmental security. Singapore emerged top in the UK charity Save the Children's 2021 study as the country where childhood is most protected from "childhood enders" such as death, being out of school, and marriage and motherhood. Our under-five child mortality rate remains low at 2.5 (per thousand resident live-births) as of 2023. Our efforts to tackle child abuse have kept the incidence rates of child abuse low, at fewer than three for every 1,000 children from 2021 to 2023, which is low compared to other countries.

We continue to support our children in having access to opportunities to realise their potential. We have expanded full-day infant and childcare places to over 200,000 places to cater to every resident child aged three and above, and put in place additional support for children from lower-income families to be enrolled into Government-supported preschools so that they can have a good start in life. Our children do not just attend and remain in school, they thrive academically. The literacy rate for those 15 and over is consistently above 95%. In international tests, Singapore emerged as the top-performing education system in Reading, Mathematics, and Science, with our 15-year-old students having demonstrated strong ability in applying thinking and reasoning processes to solve complex real-world problems.¹

Singapore has also been proactive in the face of emerging issues that have an impact on our children, including online safety, and climate change. Singapore is one of the few countries to have introduced specific legislation to minimise children's exposure to harmful online content. We have also launched efforts to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects under the Singapore Green Plan 2030, so that our children can continue to thrive in a climate-resilient home.

This report captures the various milestones of our ongoing efforts to secure a better future for them. We are committed to building on the good work that has been done, and to upholding the four principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Together with our stakeholders from the public, people and private sectors, we will continue to promote and protect our children's best interests in an increasingly complex world so that Singapore continues to be one of the best countries in the world for children to grow and thrive.

Masagos Zulkifli
Minister for Social and Family Development,
Second Minister for Health, and
Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs

¹ <https://www.oecd.org/publication/pisa-2022-results/country-notes/singapore-2f72624e/>.

Abbreviations

ABAS	Association for Breastfeeding Advocacy Singapore
ACA	Adoption of Children Act
ACWC	ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children
AMLA	Administration of Muslim Law Act
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BFHI	Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative
CCE	Character and Citizenship Education
ComLink	Community Link
CNB	Central Narcotics Bureau
CPS	Child Protective Service
CPSC	Child Protection Specialist Centre
CYPA	Children and Young Persons Act
DSA	Direct School Admission
EA	Employment Act
ECDA	Early Childhood Development Agency
EMP2030	Enabling Masterplan 2030
FGO	Family Guidance Order
Full SBB	Full Subject-Based Banding
GPPL	Government-Paid Paternity Leave
HPB	Health Promotion Board
HSA	Health Sciences Authority
IHL	Institute of Higher Learning
ICA	Immigration and Checkpoints Authority
IMC-CRC	Inter-Ministry Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child
IMDA	Infocomm Media Development Authority
LTVP/ LTVP+	Long Term Visit Pass/Long-Term-Visit-Pass-Plus
MACR	Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility
MCCY	Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth
MDDI	Ministry of Digital Development and Information
MINDEF	Ministry of Defence
MinLaw	Ministry of Law
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health

MSF	Ministry of Social and Family Development
NAC	National Arts Council
NEA	National Environment Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCS	Online Communication Service
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPAC	Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict
OPIC	Optional Protocol to the Convention on a Communications Procedure
OPSC	Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PDE	Preventive Drug Education
PDPA	Personal Data Protection Act
PDPC	Personal Data Protection Committee
PHTA	Prevention of Human Trafficking Act
RBDA	Registration of Births and Deaths Act
REACH	Response, Early Intervention and Assessment in Community Mental Health
RTC	Reformative Training Centre
SAF	Singapore Armed Forces
SBB	Subject Based Banding
SC	Singapore Citizen
SMS	Social Media Service
SPED	Special Education (Schools)
SPS	Singapore Prison Service
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WC	Women's Charter

I. Introduction

1. The Government of Singapore (“the Government”) presents Singapore’s Sixth Periodic Report (“the Report”) which includes Singapore’s progress from 2017 to 2024 in relation to the 2019 Concluding Observations, implementation of the UNCRC and the OPAC, and recent legislation and initiatives which improve the well-being and development of our children. This Report was prepared in consultation with NGOs and stakeholders who work on children’s issues.

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 52]

2. This Report has been published in English on MSF’s website. Hardcopies will be distributed to stakeholders.

Singapore’s approach to child rights

3. Singapore has been and remains fully committed to the protection, promotion and fulfilment of children’s rights. The Government ensures the safety, well-being and development of our children to **secure a better future for them**. Our policies are pragmatic, outcomes-focused and based on the child’s best interests.

Stronger families for stronger children

4. Singapore launched the ‘A Singapore Made for Families 2025’² national plan that sets out to enable families to better nurture their children, including enhanced support for parents in their parenting journey. This includes measures such as enhanced Government-Paid Leave Schemes, and enhanced support groups and resources for divorced/divorcing families. The Government continues to work with NGOs, businesses and the community in a whole-of-society effort to build strong families so that every child can grow up in a safe and stable environment.

A good foundation for every child, opportunities for all

5. Singapore considers education to be important for social mobility, and invests heavily in education to give children opportunities to develop to their fullest potential. Since the last report, the Government has enhanced access to affordable and quality preschools to meet the growing demand for full-day care. There are now over 200,000 full-day preschool places, an increase of more than 40% since 2017. This is enough to cater to every resident child aged three and above.

6. Singapore also has one of the best performing education systems in the world. According to the PISA 2022, our 15-year-old students emerged top in Reading, Mathematics and Science among 81 participating countries.³ Nonetheless, the Government continues to enhance our education system to enable our students to maximise their potential. In 2024, Singapore implemented Full SBB in secondary schools to provide students with greater flexibility to learn different subjects at different academic levels.

7. To support holistic development, MOE refreshed the CCE⁴ curriculum in 2021 to address emerging issues that affect our children, such as digital media, technology and climate change. The curriculum emphasises mental health and cyber wellness, and teaches students to safeguard their well-

² <https://www.madeforfamilies.gov.sg/home>.

³ <https://www.oecd.org/publication/pisa-2022-results/country-notes/singapore-2f72624e/>.

⁴ CCE is taught to all students in MOE schools from the primary to the pre-university levels, to holistically develop their values, character, social-emotional well-being and citizenship dispositions.

being, and maintain healthy relationships. Our IHLs⁵ also provide a range of mental well-being programmes for students to remain resilient.

8. Beyond education institutions, there are also opportunities for our children and young persons to develop their talents in the arts and sports, and contribute actively to the community. The National Youth Council's Young Changemakers and Youth Action Challenge initiatives empower youths⁶ to champion community projects and ground-up initiatives on issues that they care about. Youths are supported with workshops, mentorship, and guidance from industry professionals. In turn, they develop skills and knowledge that help them turn community-benefitting ideas into reality.

Protecting and uplifting vulnerable children

9. Singapore has been doing more to support lower-income families with young children towards achieving social mobility. One example is KidSTART which aims to empower lower-income parents to be confident and competent caregivers, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to support their children's development, health, and nutrition. Separately, lower-income families are proactively engaged to encourage timely enrolment of their child in preschools and ensure regular attendance. Lower-income children are also given priority enrolment into government-supported preschools. Full childcare subsidies are also extended to all lower-income families. More information can be found in Section VII.

10. Besides supporting lower-income children's development in early childhood, the Government also provides holistic support for their families via ComLink+ to uplift them towards stability, self-reliance and social mobility. More information can be found in Section VIII.

II. General measures of implementation

A. Declarations and reservations

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 7]

11. Singapore has carefully considered the Committee's comments relating to our declarations and reservations. We have reviewed our positions and decided to maintain these declarations to ensure that we are able to protect and promote the rights of the child in a manner which suits our national context.

B. Legislation (Article 4)

12. Singapore views the rule of law as essential in the promotion and protection of human rights. The fundamental liberties, such as the right to life and liberty, freedom of speech, assembly and association, and freedom of religion are enshrined in the Singapore Constitution. We also respect the fundamental human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

13. The rights enshrined in the UNCRC are implemented through policies, practices, and legislation. Since our last report, several amendments have been made to Singapore's legislation to enhance children's rights.

⁵ Autonomous universities, polytechnics, and the Institute of Technical Education.

⁶ The term "youths" in this report refers to persons aged 15 to 35 years. More information on the Young Changemakers and Youth Action Challenge can be found at <https://www.nyc.gov.sg/programmes-grants/young-changemakers> and <https://www.nyc.gov.sg/youth-action-challenge> respectively.

14. The CYPA was amended in 2019 to strengthen support for children who have been abused or neglected. Since 2020, protections for these children have been extended to those below 18 years, up from below 16 years previously.

15. To keep children in need of care and protection safe, the Courts can make Care and Protection Orders to place a child under the care of a fit person, such as foster parents, or in a place of safety (e.g. Children’s Home) under the supervision of a child protection officer. Since the 2019 CYPA amendments, the Courts are now also able to grant an Enhanced Care and Protection Order (“Enhanced Order”) for children assessed to require long-term out-of-home care, until the child turns 21 years old. Enhanced Orders empower designated caregivers, such as foster parents, to make timelier day-to-day and substantive caregiving decisions to provide the child with more stability and better safeguard their well-being.

16. The ACA was repealed and re-enacted in 2022 with safeguarding the child’s welfare as the primary guiding principle. The changes aim to: (a) find a good home for every child identified for adoption; (b) balance the interests of the birth parents and the child; and (c) put in place a sound regulatory system to deter undesirable practices in the commercial adoption sector. All prospective adopters must attend mandatory pre-adoption briefings and undergo an Adoption Suitability Assessment. Persons convicted of serious crimes cannot adopt and the Courts are empowered to order prospective adopters to undergo medical, psychiatric, or psychological assessments to ensure the safety of the child. The ACA also clarifies the circumstances in which the Court may dispense with the birth parents’ consent to adoption, such as where the birth parents have failed to provide suitable care for the child over a prolonged period and caused the child to need care and protection. The ACA also criminalises undesirable practices, such as fraudulently obtaining birth parents’ consent to the child’s adoption, to protect the welfare of children identified for adoption.

17. The WC was amended through the Family Violence Amendment Bill passed in 2023 to strengthen protection for survivors of family violence, including children. In addition to the existing Personal Protection Orders, Stay Away and No Contact Orders were introduced to prohibit perpetrators of family violence from being in the vicinity of the survivor, or from visiting or communicating with the survivor respectively. These legislative amendments arose from recommendations by the multi-stakeholder Taskforce on Family Violence, which had sought feedback from social service agencies, lawyers, healthcare workers and members of the public.

18. Online safety for children is a clear priority for Singapore. The Government consulted members of the public, as well as community and industry groups, receiving more than 600 responses before introducing amendments to the Broadcasting Act to regulate OCSs, which includes SMSs.⁷ The amendments allow IMDA to issue directions to disable access by Singapore users to egregious content found on OCSs. Egregious content is defined in the legislation and includes content that advocates or instructs physical and sexual violence, and child sexual exploitation. Under the amended Act, IMDA can require OCSs with significant reach or impact to put in place systems to mitigate and be accountable for the dangers of harmful content on their platforms. Today, Singapore is one of the few countries to have introduced specific legislation to regulate harmful online content.

⁷ OCSs are defined as electronic services that enable users to access or communicate content via the Internet. The regulations apply to the OCSs specified in the legislation. At present, only SMSs have been specified as a type of OCSs and subject to these regulations. Examples of SMSs that are covered by the regulations include Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube.

C. National strategy and coordination

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, paras. 9, 10, 53]

19. Singapore reviews its legislation and policies periodically to meet the evolving needs of children.

20. Beyond legislation, the various Government agencies set targets, develop approaches and report to the respective international platforms on children-related policies and practices in their domain of expertise. The Child and Maternal Health and Well-being Taskforce completed its Strategy and Action Plan and published its report in June 2024. The report sets out nine key recommendations which have been translated into 48 initiatives to drive better health and well-being outcomes for children and their families, by addressing individual health needs and modifiable risk factors across the health, social and education domains. More than half of these initiatives have been implemented, with the remainder to be implemented progressively over the next two years. Likewise, for children with disabilities, the Enabling Masterplan 2030 outlines the Government's priorities to scale up learning support and capacity for preschoolers and students.

21. These inter-agency efforts complement the work of the IMC-CRC, an inter-agency committee overseeing and coordinating Singapore's efforts to ensure adherence to the Convention. We note the Committee's recommendations to strengthen the role of IMC-CRC and to have a unified policy for children. As the lead of IMC-CRC, MSF works with various agencies to ensure Singapore's policies and practices consider and comply with Singapore's obligations under the UNCRC. Policies and programmes for our children are formulated in a coordinated manner, to ensure coherence at a national level across the implementing agencies.

Data collection [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 12]

22. We recognise the importance of a standardised information system relating to child abuse, exploitation and sexual exploitation. The Government is developing a new Domestic Violence Database, as recommended by the Taskforce on Family Violence. The database would allow the Government to have a more comprehensive, up-to-date view of domestic violence-related trends, and tackle these issues expeditiously.

23. To support child abuse victims, the Singapore Police Force ("Police") also shares information relating to victims of child abuse and domestic violence with Government agencies and NGOs, so that the child and family can receive the necessary support and intervention in a timely manner.

24. Beyond child abuse, Government agencies that oversee other child-related matters such as education, healthcare, child trafficking and children with disabilities already collect disaggregated data which can be used for analysis or cross-referencing to develop or review policies.

Sustainable Development Goals [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 6]

25. Singapore remains committed to sustainable development and tackling the generational challenge of climate change. Singapore's second Voluntary National Review in 2023⁸ outlined Singapore's progress and approach to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2021, the Singapore Green Plan 2030 was launched to advance the national agenda on sustainable development. We aim to create a sustainable and climate-resilient home where our children can continue to enjoy a good quality of life and pursue their dreams while caring for the environment. Stakeholders, including children and youths, were engaged through

⁸ Read [Singapore's second Voluntary National Review](#).

initiatives like the Green Plan Conversations and the Youth Action Challenge to make the Green Plan a reality. Singapore has also raised its climate ambition to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

D. Resource allocation (Article 4)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 11]

26. The Government allocates resources to child-related development. Government expenditure on social development was S\$53 billion in 2023. This includes expenditure relating to health, education, online safety, community development, and policies relating to disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

E. Independent monitoring

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 13]

27. While Singapore does not have an independent monitoring mechanism for human rights, we have strong co-ordination mechanisms to safeguard the rights of children and ensure their voices are heard. For instance, the Inter-Ministry Committee on Human Rights comprising 15 Government agencies coordinates the implementation of cross-cutting human rights policies, including those pertaining to children's rights. The Government also regularly engages independent stakeholders that work with children, including NGOs, for feedback on the Government's policies and work relating to children. Any feedback surfaced from the public, including children, is taken seriously and attended to expediently.

28. We will continue to monitor these mechanisms to ensure Singapore continues to be able to implement the obligations under the UNCRC effectively within Singapore's national circumstances.

F. Dissemination, training and awareness-raising (Articles 44 and 3(3))

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 14]

29. Singapore's training for professionals working with children, such as educators, police officers, legal and healthcare professionals, and social workers, is in line with the four general principles of the UNCRC, particularly sensitivity to the child's needs and respect for the views of the child.

30. MOE continues to engage and empower students to derive personal meaning from their learning experiences. For children with disabilities, MOE adopts a student-centred, needs-based approach to promote an inclusive quality education system with opportunities for all. This ensures that every student receives timely and appropriate support to achieve their full potential whether in a mainstream or SPED school.

31. ECDA is developing a Quality Teaching Tool to raise the quality of and establish a common standard for teaching which focuses on the quality of teacher-child interaction and helps early childhood educators evaluate their pedagogical practices. Educators can also use ECDA's Early Years Development Framework and Nurturing Early Learners Framework as guides for planning and implementing meaningful learning experiences, and for interacting with children. These frameworks emphasise the importance of warm and responsive interactions, and the benefits of active engagement with families and the community to support the child's healthy growth and development.

32. The Police has a well-established culture of being fair, impartial and humane. Officers are trained to exercise empathy in their interactions with members of the public, including children. The

training covers a wide range of issues including the causes of victim trauma, the needs of the victim, the vulnerabilities faced by victims and victim management. For instance, officers are taught the Safety-Emotion-Information model which covers techniques that officers can use during interviews to help victims feel safe, express their emotions and process information. This helps to ensure that interviews and investigations are conducted sensitively and professionally.

33. The Law Society of Singapore offers “Cross-Border Family Mediation Training” jointly organised with the International Mediation Centre for Family Conflict and Child Abduction, which trains legal professionals to manage cross-border family disputes, taking into consideration the child’s best interests.

34. For family cases, judicial officers and court administrators receive training on a variety of topics, including how to consider the child’s best interests. Family proceedings are ‘judge-led’⁹ and the child’s welfare is considered from a multi-disciplinary approach. Judges are also trained in interactive and observational skills relating to children.

35. Medical practitioners are trained in patient-centred care. They are equipped to recognise clinical signs of physical and emotional abuse, and neglect, to understand the emotional and social implications of disabilities on the child and the family, and to advise on the relevant social and community support services available. The training syllabus for nursing covers patient-centred care, understanding the patients’ rights (including privacy), consent, societal norms, gender and equality under ethics and law. Topics relating to identifying behavioural issues, disorders and concerns associated with potential abuse, bullying, and neglect are also taught in post-registration paediatric nursing programmes.

36. The Social Service Institute conducts a comprehensive range of courses to equip social service practitioners with the necessary skills and knowledge to work with children. Information on the UNCRC that applies directly to the care, education and support of children are incorporated in the course contents. From 2019 to 2023, the Social Service Institute organised a total of 2,923 courses, of which 736 courses with 27,914 training places were tailored for those working with children, youths and persons with disabilities.

G. Cooperation with civil society (Article 4)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 15]

37. The Government consistently consults the public and NGOs in the development and implementation of policies to better support children and their rights, such as prior to the legislative amendments of the CYP, ACA and WC in 2019, 2022 and 2023 respectively. The Government also partnered NGOs and the industry on online safety and digital literacy programmes to educate children and their families.

38. MSF also works closely with NGOs to safeguard the child’s best interests. MSF engaged accredited adoption agencies to build up their capacity and capability to meet and implement the requirements of the new ACA. This was done through monthly meetings to discuss the operational implications of the new changes (e.g. mandatory pre-adoption requirements). MSF also empowers NGOs such as CPSCs to conduct effective community-based child protection intervention to reduce the

⁹ This approach allows the Court to make orders directing parties to attend mediation or counselling, and also make directions to help parties focus on the relevant issues to expedite the fair and just resolution of the case in the best interests of the child.

need for statutory intervention. CPSCs workers are empowered to exercise selected powers under the CYPA, which allows them to work with clients who may otherwise question or challenge the CPSCs' authority.

H. International cooperation (Article 4)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 51]

39. Singapore is committed to promoting the well-being and development of children in our region and beyond. Since the inauguration of the ACWC in 2010, the Government has appointed independent representatives to the ACWC, including one for children's rights.

40. MSF, as Singapore's focal ministry for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Pillar, has worked with the ACWC to promote and protect the rights of children in Singapore and ASEAN through various projects and initiatives. Examples include co-leading (with Brunei and Vietnam) the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Bullying of Children which was adopted at the 39th ASEAN Leaders' Summit in 2021, and organising the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights-ACWC Training Workshop on the UNCRC with the support of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand in 2017.

41. Singapore remains committed to international cooperation and capacity-building in other countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Since 1992, our flagship capacity-building platform for technical assistance to developing countries, the Singapore Cooperation Programme, has hosted over 150,000 officials from more than 180 countries, territories and intergovernmental organisations. This programme facilitates sharing of experiences and best practices to encourage countries to work together to achieve common goals. For example, in 2018 and 2020, we ran courses for officials to identify trends, issues and opportunities in early childhood education.

I. Children's rights and the business sectors

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 16]

42. Singapore has sector-specific regulatory frameworks and a range of monitoring and implementation approaches to minimise harmful impact of business activities on all, including children.¹⁰ Various legislation, such as the Companies Act, Resource Sustainability Act, Hazardous Waste Act, Environmental Protection and Management Act, Environmental Public Health Act and Healthcare Services Act help to safeguard against the negative impact of business activities.

43. On children's health, to improve consumer awareness, counter heavy marketing and 'premiumisation' of infant formula, and promote breastfeeding, the Food Regulations were amended in 2019 to, inter alia, prohibit health and nutrition claims and the idealisation of infant formula.

44. Beyond regulations and marketing restrictions, there are programmes and initiatives such as school talks and the provision of healthy school meals to encourage healthy eating. In partnership with MOE, parents are also provided tips regularly to support them in making healthy dietary choices for their children.

¹⁰ Children in employment are also afforded special protection where applicable. See paragraph 203.

45. Singapore also has broader strategies to safeguard long-term environmental sustainability for future generations. See paragraph 25 for details.

III. Definition of the child

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 18(a), 46(b)]

46. Amendments to the CYP A took effect in 2020. Consequently, Government and community support for abused and neglected children was extended to older children aged between 16 and 18. Rehabilitation-related amendments (including raising the upper age limit of child offenders from 16 to 18 years old) will be operationalised by 2025 to ensure that stakeholders have built capacity and capabilities for older children. Education and career guidance support, greater access to tertiary education and vocational curricula, and aftercare support would be provided to address the needs of older children aged between 16 and 18.

47. The Penal Code has strict penalties for serious offences (particularly sexual offences) committed against children. In 2019 and 2021, the Penal Code was amended to enhance the protection of children which includes:

- a. Enhancing penalties for offences committed against children below 14 years, where offenders may be punished with up to twice the maximum penalty;
- b. Introducing a new offence to criminalise causing the death of a child below 14 years by sustained abuse;
- c. Introducing new offences to criminalise the entire spectrum of activities involving child abuse material where the child is below 16 years;
- d. Introducing new offences of sexual communication with, or sexual activity in the presence of, a child below 16 years; and
- e. Expanding protection for children of or above 16 years old but below 18 years from sexual activity committed in a relationship that is exploitative of the child.

IV. General principles

A. Non-discrimination (Article 2)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 20]

48. As a multi-religious and multi-ethnic country, it is important that Singapore combats discrimination and that everyone enjoys equal access to opportunities. As explained in previous reports, the Singapore Constitution guarantees all Singaporeans, including children, the right to equality, non-discrimination and equal protection under the law. Singapore prioritises the education, health, and protection of children so that they can realise their full potential, regardless of their background.

49. The Government also works with community partners to educate children on discrimination. MCCY partners an independent publication platform, 'What's Up', to educate children about everyday racism and stereotyping through child-friendly articles like the "Stories on Casual Racism" series. IMDA's content codes for mainstream television and radio state that programmes should not encourage or in any way lead to discrimination against any section of the community.

50. MOE's school curriculum emphasises the importance of non-discrimination. CCE lessons teach students mutual respect, empathy and sensitivity towards one another's feelings. The History and Social Studies curricula, which span from primary to pre-university levels, examine specific societies, events and issues to teach students the importance of respecting individuals for their differences and

maintaining harmony in diverse societies. Students are also encouraged to reflect on their roles and responsibilities in promoting and building an inclusive and harmonious society in Singapore.

51. To uphold non-discrimination and equality in the classroom, Singapore's teachers learn pedagogical skills to foster a caring and enabling classroom environment. They are also trained to look out for students in distress and be proactive in addressing mean and hurtful behaviour.

52. Singapore has taken progressive measures to improve the protection of the financial welfare of Muslim women and their dependants under the Muslim inheritance law. In 2017, AMLA was amended to allow women beneficiaries to become sole administrators of a deceased man's estate. Additionally, a 2019 Fatwa (religious ruling) on joint tenancy grants wives the right of survivorship over marital property upon their husband's death. These measures help to ensure that mothers are better protected to continue providing for their children and maintain a stable home environment, in the event the husband/father passes on.

53. Additionally, children who are born out of wedlock and not entitled to inheritance under Muslim law can now receive financial support from biological fathers under the 2008 Fatwa which provides that biological fathers should provide maintenance for the children. Biological fathers are also now better equipped through public education and outreach initiatives to safeguard their children's well-being in the longer term, including for their children who are born out of wedlock. Examples include allocating up to one-third of the estate through a will and revocable insurance nominations. Collectively, these efforts demonstrate Singapore's commitment to balancing respect for Muslim law with the protection of children's rights and welfare.

54. Government-funded social services shelters and public mental health services are accessible to all, regardless of one's sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Social service professionals are also trained to be sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and needs of those they serve. School counsellors are also trained in understanding gender identity and sexual orientation issues. They provide a safe space for children to discuss and receive psychological and emotional support regarding their concerns, and guide them to develop skills and strategies to cope with their situation. Social service and healthcare professionals bear in mind parental and familial concerns as they work with the child, and encourage communications between the children and family.

55. The Police sensitively and professionally manage child victims, in line with the principle of non-discrimination (see paragraph 32).

B. Best interests of the child (Article 3)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 21]

56. Upholding the child's best interests has been a guiding principle across Singapore's laws and family justice systems that have an impact on children, which include adoption, protection from sexual exploitation and the digital harms. The ACA is anchored on the child's welfare. For example, it prohibits advertising of children and placement of children with prospective adopters before they have been assessed as suitable to adopt. See paragraph 16 for more information.

57. The Government also regularly reviews our criminal laws to protect children from sexual perpetrators. See paragraphs 46 and 47 for more information on the relevant legislative changes.

58. Safeguarding the child’s best interests is also a key priority in the online space. As mentioned in paragraph 18, the amendments to the Broadcasting Act allow IMDA to designate OCSs with significant reach or impact to comply with Codes of Practice. IMDA’s Code of Practice for Online Safety issued in July 2023 requires designated SMSs to have systems or processes in place to minimise Singapore users’ exposure to harmful content¹¹, with additional protection for children. For example, children must not be targeted to receive content that is detrimental to their physical and mental well-being. Children or their parents and guardians must also have access to tools to manage children’s safety by minimising their children’s exposure to harmful and inappropriate content, or unwanted interactions on the SMS. Children who use high-risk search terms, such as those relating to self-harm and suicide, on the SMS must be actively offered relevant safety information such as local suicide prevention hotlines.

C. The right to life, survival and development (Article 6)

59. Singapore continues to protect the right to life, survival and development of children, as mentioned in Sections VII, VIII and IX. Under the ‘A Singapore’s Made for Families 2025’ Roadmap, there is a strong network of services that support expecting and new parents in their child-raising journey, such as parenting resource platforms e.g. Parent Hub and Families for Life. The number of abandoned babies referred to CPS continues to remain low (average of one abandoned baby referred to CPS per year from 2018 to 2023).

60. From a young age, our children are empowered to be contributors to their own right to life, survival and development. Start Small Dream Big is a movement by the ECDA to encourage preschools to create platforms for children to give back to society and inculcate values such as kindness, compassion, and respect. Since its inception in 2015, this movement has seen its highest record of participation in 2024 with over 80,000 preschoolers from 1,200 preschools. There is also strong consensus among stakeholders surveyed that Start Small Dream Big provides a meaningful platform to support children’s development (96% of educators, 97% of parents, and all community partners of over 1,500 stakeholders surveyed).

61. To protect the future of our children, Singapore has also developed broad-based climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. There are measures to safeguard children’s safety and well-being amidst hot weather. In addition to heatwave response measures for extreme hot weather and the Heat Stress Advisory¹², schools and preschools take additional precautions to minimise children’s risk of heat-related illnesses. This includes minimising outdoor physical activities during hotter parts of the day. Our strategies also include long-term measures and sustainable plans, such as coastal protection, imposition of carbon taxes to reduce reliance on fossil fuels for energy, and encouraging the adoption of electric vehicles, that would benefit future generations. These measures also address the findings of the Third National Climate Change Study, which presents the world’s highest resolution climate projections for Southeast Asia based on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 6th Assessment Report.

62. Though Singapore is one of the most water-stressed countries in the world, our children enjoy access to clean water and sanitation. Our robust Four National Taps system ensures safe and secure water supply – water from local catchments, imported water, desalinated water, and treated used water,

¹¹ There are six categories of harmful content identified in the Code of Practice for Online Safety: sexual content, violent content, suicide and self-harm content, cyberbullying content, content endangering public health, and content facilitating vice and organised crime.

¹² Launched in 2023, the advisory guides the public on minimising their risk of heat-related illnesses on hotter days.

which we call NEWater. Schools educate students on Singapore’s strategy on water sustainability through closing the water loop, as well as the importance of water conservation and keeping our waters clean. This sensitises them to Singapore’s water needs and encourages them to play their part in pursuing water sustainability. With long-term planning, investments in water infrastructure and development of weather-resilient water sources such as NEWater, Singapore continues to improve the efficiency and resilience of our water infrastructure to meet the needs of our children.

63. Singapore also actively enhances our school syllabuses, programmes and post-secondary education landscape to prepare students for the future, including incorporating environmental sustainability into relevant school syllabuses and programmes.

64. The Nurturing Early Learners Framework, which guides teaching and learning for children aged four to six years old, has a component aimed at developing responsibility, care and respect for the environment. Called “Discovery of the World”, it empowers educators to raise awareness in children on how human behaviour impact the environment such as pollution, and how children can care for the environment through their daily habits.

65. In addition, to nurture our seven to 18-year-olds to be stewards of the environment, MOE will continue to enhance their sustainability-related knowledge, practices, infrastructure and partnerships to strengthen sustainability education in schools.

66. IHLs have introduced common modules to equip students with sustainability knowledge and skillsets. To prepare students and working professionals for emerging green jobs, IHLs are in the process of introducing specialised courses to cater to this.

D. Respect for the views of the child (Article 12)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 22]

67. Singapore values and gives due consideration to the voices of children and youth. The Forward Singapore exercise launched in June 2022 engaged Singaporeans from all walks of life, including children and youths on how we can build a better Singapore. Consultations were open to all, with over 200,000 members of the public voicing their views on issues of concern to them over 16 months. This included the National Youth Dialogue series organised in partnership between the National Youth Council and the Global Shapers Community. Over 600 youths stepped up to share their views on critical and future-oriented issues such as housing, healthcare, environmental and bread-and-butter issues (e.g. cost of living and job support).

68. In schools, MOE regularly gathers students’ views through surveys and programme-specific feedback channels. Schools also provide age-appropriate avenues for students to be heard, such as townhall sessions with school leaders, focus group discussions, surveys and online and social media platforms. Often, student councils or leadership boards are the key conduits for students’ voices in schools. Additionally, MOE officials regularly visit schools to understand and engage students on education policies and issues.

69. In the criminal justice context, the Criminal Justice Reform Act and Evidence (Amendment) Act seek to ensure children’s views are heard and given due consideration in the Courts, by enhancing procedural protections for child witnesses and child victims. For example, victims of sexual offences or child abuse offences may be allowed to give their evidence-in-chief behind a physical screen or through video link so that the victim does not have to see the accused. The alleged victim of a sexual or

child abuse offence will automatically be allowed to testify behind closed doors, unless the alleged victim elects to give evidence in open court. Under the CYPA, children brought before the Youth Court for criminal offences and non-criminal proceedings are required to attend the hearing as their presence is required. However, for non-criminal proceedings, the Court has the discretion to dispense with the requirement for the child's attendance due to their young age or other good reasons. The Court may also call for social reports relating to them. Further, for custody and care disputes under the WC, or in determining the child's welfare under the Guardianship of Infants Act, the Court must regard the child's wishes if they are of sufficient maturity to express their opinion. This may be done through the conduct of judicial interviews. In addition, their voices are also heard in divorce proceedings through the appointment of a child representative provided under the Family Justice Rules, or the calling of evaluation reports relating to them.

V. Civil rights and freedoms

A. Name and nationality (Article 7)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 23]

70. There are various straightforward pathways to citizenship for the children of Singaporean parents. The majority are granted citizenship by birth or descent as a matter of right. Children who are not eligible for citizenship by birth or descent may apply for citizenship by registration, whether through the sponsorship of a SC parent or on the child's own merit.

71. Singapore is one of the smallest and most densely populated countries in the world with limited land and resources. Given our limitations, we have to carefully consider all applications for citizenship, including those by stateless persons. Consequently, Singapore is not a party to the international convention relating to stateless persons. Singapore takes its treaty obligations seriously and only accedes to international treaties when Singapore is able to fully fulfil the treaty obligations.

B. Preservation of identity (Article 8)

72. All babies born in Singapore are entitled to an identity. Under RBDA, all births in Singapore must be registered within 42 days from the date of birth, following which a birth certificate will be issued. If a child is registered without a name, the RBDA allows for the child's name to be registered within seven years of his/her birth. The RBDA provides for a child's birth particulars to be re-registered only in specific circumstances, for example following legal adoption, where the particulars of the adoptive parents and the child's new name may be re-registered.

73. To help bereaved parents cope with the loss of a stillborn child, the Stillbirths and Births (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2024 was passed in Parliament in January 2024. This Act introduces new provisions in the RBDA which, when operationalised, will allow parents to officially register a name for their stillborn child.

C. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)

74. We refer to Part A of Section IV on non-discrimination in this Report. As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, Singapore places great emphasis on combating discrimination and preserving harmony, to maintain a harmonious and peaceful society for our future generations. As long as these principles are not prejudiced, Singapore respects the freedom to express thought, conscience and religion. This position is consistent with Article 14(3) of the UNCRC.

D. Freedom of expression (Article 13), and freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (Article 15)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 24]

75. Every SC, including children, has the right to express their views, associate with others and assemble peacefully. These rights are protected under our Constitution. Such rights must be exercised responsibly and in accordance with the rule of law, and balanced against other rights and interests, such as the maintenance of public order, public security, and racial and religious harmony.

76. Singapore has been careful to protect harmony and public order while providing for the exercise of rights by individuals. Under the Public Order Act, a Police permit is required for cause-based public assemblies or processions. A permit may be granted if there are no public order concerns, such as if the views being supported may cause feelings of enmity, hatred, ill-will or hostility between different groups in Singapore. Singaporeans who want to protest or demonstrate about issues that concern them can also do so at a designated site, the Speakers' Corner, without the need for a permit, subject to certain conditions being met. This way, we strike a balance amongst competing interests: the provision of adequate space for the individual's right of peaceful assembly and political expression, and the preservation of public order.

77. The Administration of Justice (Protection) Act consolidates the law on contempt of court and is consistent with the right to the freedom of expression. The rationale for the law is to protect the administration of justice and public confidence in it, which is crucial for the rule of law and the maintenance of law and order in any civilised society. The Administration of Justice (Protection) Act balances a person's right to the freedom of expression with (a) another person's right to a fair trial, and (b) the need to uphold public confidence in the Courts. This is consistent with Article 13(2) of the UNCRC which provides that the exercise of the right to the freedom of expression may be subject to restrictions where it is necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, or for the protection of national security or public order.

E. Access to appropriate information (Article 17)

78. The Government works with community partners to enhance online safety of Singapore users, especially our children.

79. MDDI worked with technology companies such as Google, Meta, ByteDance and X to launch an Online Safety Digital Toolkit for parents in March 2023. This toolkit recommends parental controls, privacy and reporting tools, and self-help resources for parents to manage their child's safety online. Bite-sized materials to support parents in guiding their children to navigate the online world safely and responsibly are also available on IMDA's Digital for Life portal, MSF's Families for Life Parenting website and MOE's Parents Gateway portal. Topics covered include managing children's screen use, cultivating healthy online habits and safeguarding children from online risks such as cyberbullying and online sexual grooming. TOUCH Community Services' "First Device Campaign", prepares parents for the milestone of a child receiving their first digital device, while Cyberlite Books' quarterly cyber safety talks educate parents and caregivers of primary and secondary school children on safe screen use and online gaming.

80. Singapore ensures that children have access to quality broadcasts and are protected from injurious material. IMDA ensures that materials are age-appropriate and meet prevailing requirements,

including age ratings for films and video games, scheduling restrictions on linear TV channels, and access control restriction mechanisms on subscription television and internet streaming services.

81. Digital technology is an integral part of the learning experience for our students. We aim to enable students to be technology-literate independent learners, teachers to design and facilitate meaningful technology-mediated learning experiences, and schools to support learning anytime and anywhere.

82. During home-based learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, our teachers' efforts to engage students, coupled with learning resources such as the Singapore Student Learning Space, helped to minimise disruption to teaching and learning. Our schools loaned over 20,000 digital devices and more than 1,600 internet-enabling devices to students who lacked digital access for home-based learning.

83. Under the National Digital Literacy Programme launched in March 2020, every secondary school student has been equipped with a personal laptop or tablet for learning since 2021. Eligible lower-income Singaporean households, including those with school-going children, can tap on IMDA's DigitalAccess@Home scheme (launched in April 2023) for subsidised broadband and digital devices.

84. The launch of the National Digital Literacy Programme for our schools and IHLs better enables our students to navigate the digital age and be confident, critical, and responsible users of digital technologies. This is complemented by the cyber wellness components of the refreshed CCE curriculum that equips students to be safe and responsible users of technology.

F. Protection of privacy and protection of image (Article 16)

Safeguarding children's privacy [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 25]

85. In addition to initiatives such as the Online Safety Digital Toolkit (paragraph 79), the Government is also reviewing prevailing guidelines to enhance safeguards for child privacy. PDPC is developing advisory guidelines on how the PDPA applies to children's personal data, covering issues such as obtaining children's consent, using children's personal data, and according higher standards of protection to children's personal data. PDPA allows for PDPC to issue advisory guidelines that indicate the manner in which PDPC will interpret the provisions of the PDPA.

VI. Violence against children

A. Abuse and neglect, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Articles 19 and 34)

Combating child abuse and sexual exploitation [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 28, 29 (b) – (d)]

86. Refer to 'Data Collection' under Section II of the Report on how the Government collects and uses data to combat child abuse and exploitation.

87. Singapore constantly reviews our legislation with a wide range of stakeholders, such as lawyers and members of the judiciary, to study new crime trends in Singapore and abroad to keep pace with emerging threats and improve protection for vulnerable victims. As mentioned in paragraph 47, the Penal Code was amended to enhance the protection of children against sexual offences. The stiff penalties for these offences reflect our society's abhorrence for such behaviour. As child sexual exploitation is transnational, the Penal Code amendments also ensure that SCs or permanent residents who commit such acts overseas cannot escape criminal liability.

88. With effect from March 2022, we increased the maximum imprisonment terms for the offence of engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child and the offence of causing such a child to observe sexual imagery (where the child is under 16, or aged between 16 and 18 and in an exploitative relationship with the offender) from one year to two years.

89. In addition, the Penal Code amendments strengthened the offence of sexual grooming of children below 16 years and exploitative sexual grooming of children of or above 16 but below 18 years by reducing the threshold at which the offence is made out. For example, instead of requiring the perpetrator to have communicated with the minor on at least two occasions, the offence is now made out if there was at least one prior communication.

90. Since the amendments to the Penal Code came into force in 2020, the Police has intensified enforcement against offenders who deal with child sexual abuse material. In 2024, together with foreign counterparts, the Police conducted a five-week cross-border crackdown on online child sexual exploitation activities at 236 locations in Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea, and arrested a total of 272 suspects, 28 of whom were in Singapore.

91. Victims are offered emotional support through the Victim Care Cadre Programme, where trained volunteers provide a listening ear and care for victims who may be struggling to cope in the aftermath of trauma. The volunteers can also be present for the victim during court proceedings. Child Protection Officers support victims without a protective family member or caregiver during the investigation phase, to help them with their recovery process. Since 2018, the Police has also been using the Multi-Disciplinary Interview model, which uses a trauma-informed, victim-centric approach to interview child victims. The interview model reduces and consolidates multiple interviews by different agencies to reduce trauma to the victim.

Encouraging the reporting of violence against children

92. The law requires the reporting of certain offences, including child abuse. For example, in section 424 of the Criminal Procedure Code 2010, every person aware of the commission of or the intention of any other person to commit certain arrestable offences must immediately make a police report. These offences include offences affecting the human body (Chapter 16 of the Penal Code), including children (such as voluntarily causing grievous hurt, and sexual assault). Additionally, if a staff in a preschool has reasonable cause to suspect that abuse has occurred to any child, the staff must report it to ECDA and other relevant authorities, such as CPS in the case of suspected abuse by a household member. Failure to do so is an offence punishable with a fine, imprisonment or both.

93. Professionals from education, health, law enforcement and social service sectors have been trained to use the Sector-Specific Screening Guide and the Child Abuse Reporting Guide to guide their reporting of suspected child abuse to CPS. The Screening Guide is used by frontline professionals who have contact with children on a regular basis (such as teachers), to guide their decision on whether the concern should be discussed with someone in their organisation who specialises in the Child Abuse Reporting Guide so that appropriate action can be taken. Since 2018, this resource has been expanded to an online learning portal to widen outreach and provide easy access to information on the guides for sector professionals.

94. The Government also encourages the community to report suspected cases of violence, including those against children, if they are aware of such cases. MSF updated the Break the Silence public education campaign in 2021 to increase the awareness of different types of abuse, including non-physical abuse, and to encourage survivors and bystanders to seek help. The “Signal for Help” hand

sign was also introduced for survivors to call for help discreetly. As of July 2024, through the Domestic Violence Awareness Training, more than 9,300 people across the people, public and private sectors have been trained to spot and report signs of family violence, and MSF will continue to extend our training and outreach.

B. Torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Articles 37(a) & 28, para. 2)

95. Singapore neither conducts nor condones torture or other cruel, inhumane, degrading treatment or punishment against children.

C. Physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims (Article 39)

96. CPS and community-based CPSCs provide support for children who experience family or sexual violence. Depending on the safety concerns, risks and needs, CPS and CPSCs work with families to provide the necessary intervention to minimise the recurrence of harm. There are also trained psychologists who provide evidence-based trauma interventions for children and their caregivers to treat their trauma and abuse-related psychological issues.

97. MSF and its community partners work with schools and educational institutions, including their counsellors and student welfare officers, to ensure that school-going children receive the appropriate post-violence care and support. MSF also works with community agencies that provide psychological services, including training for the agencies' staff, to identify trauma needs to help the children and their families heal.

D. Corporal punishment

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 27, 46(e)]

In judicial systems

98. For child offenders who are admitted to RTCs, caning is only imposed as a punishment for particularly serious offences. Rehabilitation is the primary sentencing consideration for child offenders, and caning is therefore used only as a last resort and as part of a suite of rehabilitative and restorative measures.

99. Singapore regularly reviews our criminal justice policies, including policies on corporal punishment, to ensure that they are effective and relevant to keep Singapore safe and secure.

In Children's Homes

100. Corporal punishment is not practised in all Children's Homes, which admit children in need of out-of-home care due to child protection concerns. This is aligned with our trauma-informed approach in rehabilitating these children.

101. Singapore will retain the use of corporal punishment as a last resort to manage serious institutional misconduct of child offenders. As stated in our previous report,¹³ corporal punishment is only administered on male residents in Government Youth Homes and juvenile rehabilitation centres as

¹³ CRC/C/SGP/4-5: p. 17-18, para. 69 – 71.

a last resort for serious infringements, with strict regulations in place. It is also only considered after counselling and restorative rehabilitation methods fail to address their misconduct.

In schools

102. In schools, caning is carried out as an educative and disciplinary measure for serious offences committed by male students, only when other corrective actions have been exhausted. Caning also serves to deter the student from committing further offences. Schools are provided with clear guidelines on how to administer caning. This ensures that caning is only administered after due consideration and in a manner that ensures the safety and well-being of the student.

103. Caning, when used, is never done in isolation but is instead carried out as part of a suite of restorative and disciplinary measures. For example, teachers also focus on preventive strategies, including helping students replace inappropriate behaviours with appropriate ones, and restoring the students' relationships with others who have been hurt by their actions. In addition, teachers also seek to address the underlying reasons for the inappropriate behaviour so that behavioural changes can be sustained.

At home

104. As stated in our previous report,¹⁴ Singapore respects the rights and role of parents in caring for and disciplining their children. At the same time, MSF continues to educate parents on alternative, non-physical means of discipline and to build positive relationships with their children by making available evidence-backed parenting resources and strategies.¹⁵

E. Early and forced marriages (Article 24, para. 3)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 8, 18(b), 18(c), 29(a)]

105. Under the WC, only persons who are at least 18 years old can have their marriage solemnised. However, in exceptional circumstances, the Minister for Social and Family Development may grant a Special Marriage Licence for marriages involving children below 18 years. Such marriages are very rare and are scrutinised very carefully before a Special Marriage License is granted. The number of such marriages has declined from 0.05% (11) in 2018 to zero in 2023. Robust safeguards are in place to ensure the long-term interests of the child. For example, the applicant couple will be required to first complete a mandatory marriage preparation workshop, and is referred to attend programmes supporting families in early childhood development (if the female applicant is pregnant). Their application will then be thoroughly assessed by a qualified social worker appointed by MSF, before the Minister considers the application.

106. For Muslim marriages, under AMLA, only persons who are at least 18 years old can have their marriage solemnised. However, AMLA also allows for Muslim marriages involving girls below 18 years in special circumstances, only with the (a) approval of the Kadi (solemniser); (b) consent of the child's parents/legal guardian; and (c) child's completion of a mandatory marriage preparation programme. Such marriages are also rare, with the number declining from 0.2% (12) in 2018 to 0.13% (7) in 2023.

¹⁴ CRC/C/SGP/Q/4-5/Add.1: p. 7, para. 36-37.

¹⁵ Parenting resources can be found at <https://www.familiesforlife/parenting>.

107. Marital immunity for rape has been fully repealed by the Criminal Law Reform Act in 2019, on the basis that the Government does not condone sexual violence in any setting.

VII. Family environment and alternative care

A. Family environment and parental guidance (Article 5) and parental responsibilities (Article 18)

Enhanced parenthood support

108. The Government periodically reviews our Marriage and Parenthood Package to ensure that it continues to address the changing needs of Singaporean parents. Key measures under the Package range from helping couples own their first home to strengthening affordability, accessibility and quality of preschools, enhancing financial support to defray the cost of raising children, and providing greater work-life support for parents to better manage their work and family commitments. Since 2023, the Government enhanced the Baby Bonus Scheme¹⁶ to increase financial support in the child's early years. To help parents better manage work and caregiving commitments, the Government also doubled GPPL from two weeks to four weeks on a voluntary basis and increased Unpaid Infant Care Leave to 12 days per parent per year in the child's first two years from January 2024. In August 2024, the Government announced that it will be mandating the additional two weeks of GPPL and introducing a new Shared Parent Leave scheme that will provide couples with 10 weeks of paid parental leave, to be shared between themselves. Beyond the Package, the Government also invests substantially in housing, healthcare and education, to ensure Singapore remains a good home for Singaporeans to start families and raise children.

Made for Families

109. Under the Families for Life¹⁷ initiative, efforts to build strong and resilient families were renewed. 2022 was dedicated as the Year of Celebrating SG Families to recognise the importance of families. Continuing on from the efforts of the Year of Celebrating SG Families, Singapore launched 'A Singapore Made for Families 2025', a national plan to strengthen the ecosystem of support for families. One of the initiatives under the plan is to form Parent Peer Support Groups in partnership with Government-supported preschools, where parents will be connected to a supportive network and be guided by trained facilitators on effective parenting and active fathering. Resources on forging strong parent-child relationships are also shared regularly with Parent Support Groups. From 2024, the annual National Family Week has been expanded to a month-long National Family Festival to provide opportunities for families to bond and create memories through large-scale events and campaigns.

110. To support the development, health, and well-being of young children from lower-income families, the Government is expanding the KidSTART programme nationwide to offer it to all eligible families. The target is to support at least 80% of eligible children born from 2023, an increase from around 20% in 2023. KidSTART equips parents with the knowledge and skills to nurture their children's development, empowering them to be confident and competent caregivers.

Preschool accessibility and affordability [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 30]

¹⁶ The Baby Bonus Scheme comprises a Cash Gift and a Child Development Account – a special co-savings account in which the Government will provide a dollar-for-dollar co-matching for savings deposited, up to a limit. The account monies can be used in areas such as healthcare and preschool fees.

¹⁷ The Families for Life movement cultivates a pro-family mindset among Singaporeans from young, and to support bonding and communication between parents and their children.

111. The Government ensures that preschools remain affordable to families through subsidies and fee caps at Government-supported preschools. Parents with Singaporean children enrolled in childcare centres are supported with subsidies of up to S\$600 per month for full-day infant care and up to S\$300 per month for full-day childcare. Families with a monthly household income of S\$12,000 and below, with working mothers, receive additional means-tested subsidies as such families have a greater need for full-day childcare while the parents are at work. In 2020, the monthly household income ceiling for means-tested subsidies was raised from S\$7,500 to S\$12,000, allowing more children to benefit from preschool subsidies.

112. Non-working mothers who do not require full-day childcare have the option of enrolling their children in half-day kindergarten programmes, which are often more affordable. Means-tested subsidies are available at Government-supported kindergartens, regardless of the mother's working status. For non-working mothers who require full-day childcare, higher subsidies (no different from those for working mothers) are available if they have valid circumstances, such as looking for a job, studying, medical reasons, or other caregiving duties and needs. This support was further enhanced in March 2019.

113. Government-supported preschools must also keep within stipulated fee caps, which have kept median fees in preschools stable over the past decade. Fee caps were reduced in 2021 and 2023, with the most recent round of reductions benefiting over 100,000 Singaporean children. Despite the rising cost of living, a median-income household with a preschool-aged child¹⁸ enrolled in full-day, Government-supported childcare centre would spend 3.1% of their income on preschool out-of-pocket expenses in 2023, a decrease compared to 4.8% of their income in 2017.

114. The Government also ensures that preschool remains affordable for lower-income families. These families can pay as little as S\$3 a month for full-day childcare at Government-supported preschools, or S\$1 a month for half-day kindergarten, after subsidies. Families living in public rental flats or receiving Government social assistance automatically qualify for maximum preschool subsidies. By the end of 2024, full childcare subsidies will be extended to all lower-income families based on their income tier. Beyond subsidies, lower-income families can also apply for financial assistance and start-up grants to defray the initial costs of enrolment. The Government will continue to enhance access to affordable and quality preschools to give every child a good start in life.

Family Guidance Orders [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 32(a)]

115. The new FGO programme adopts a community-based, non-legislative approach to support parents in guiding children with serious behavioural issues. This was renamed and updated from the previous "Beyond Parental Control" programme. Today, children of moderate and high-risk profiles and their parents are required to complete a family programme as a first step. This emphasises the importance of the family in addressing children's behavioural concerns. Failing which, parents can file a Court application seeking a FGO. The family programme has been effective in addressing the family's needs, with very few parents proceeding to file for a FGO. The three-year average of FGO cases filed in the period of 2017 to 2019 (before the family programme was implemented) has dropped from 95 to 18 in the period of 2021 to 2023 (after the family programme was implemented).

116. In deciding a FGO application, the Court will consider the family's progress on the mandatory family programme and the circumstances of the case before deciding whether to place the child under

¹⁸ The income of the "median-income household" is based on ranking citizen households with at least one child aged 0-6, by their monthly household income from work, excluding employer Central Provident Fund contributions.

the supervision of an appointed person whilst remaining at home with his/her parents, or commit the child to the care of a fit person or place of safety.

117. The new FGO programme also ensures that applications are not submitted or withdrawn frivolously, by ensuring that applications are accompanied with the recommendation of an approved welfare officer, and withdrawals are allowed only with the consent of the Court.

B. Protection of children of incarcerated parents

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 34]

118. With the sudden absence of a family member due to incarceration, children may develop social and emotional issues which need to be addressed. SPS has put in place measures to support family members and children of offenders.

119. Through interviews conducted upon the offenders' admission to the prison, SPS helps to facilitate the timely identification of needs presented by the offenders' families, including that of their children, and direct them to the appropriate community resources. Offenders can also ask for assistance on behalf of their families and children at any time during their incarceration.

120. Family Resource Centres are one of several sources of help available to families impacted by incarceration. Such Centres are set up by SPS and provide interim social and financial support to such families. Located at the Prison Link Centre where families go to for visitations, families can walk in to seek support when needed. Trained social workers at Family Resource Centres assess families' needs and conduct referrals to help the families get the support required, such as assistance with childcare, housing, or employment. For families with more complex needs, the length of services and support by the Family Resources Centres may be extended for three to six months. Families in need of longer-term support would be referred to social support systems in the community so they may continue receiving the required assistance in a sustainable manner. This includes assistance from religious organisations, social service agencies, or Family Service Centres.

121. SPS also works with other Government and social service agencies to support families with incarcerated members, through programmes such as counselling and family bonding programmes. Fortnightly visitations are facilitated to provide children and their incarcerated parent with the emotional support that they need to maintain family ties. Additional or extended visitation periods may also be granted on a needs basis.

122. Prisoners sentenced to capital punishment are allowed more frequent weekly visits by family members. In the week before the execution, prisoners sentenced to capital punishment are allowed to have twice-daily visits. Visits can be conducted face-to-face or via video calls, depending on the family's preference. SPS will also provide the use of a private room for the family members of prisoners sentenced to capital punishment on the eve of execution. A team of officers, comprising Prison psychologists and Prison officers, will also be assigned to attend to the family's needs and provide support in the week before the execution and thereafter.

C. Separation from parents (Articles 9, 10)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 41]

123. Singapore recognises the importance of keeping families together and, as far as possible, does not separate children from parents.

124. All citizenship or Permanent Residency applications by foreign spouses who married a SC are evaluated holistically and carefully on a range of criteria, including whether the SC sponsor can support the family and if the marriage is stable. Those applying for Singapore citizenship or Permanent Residency with family ties are generally assessed more favourably. Having SC children from the marriage would also be an advantage.

125. In recognition of the importance of keeping families together, foreign spouses who do not qualify for Permanent Residency may be granted a LTVP which allows them to remain in Singapore with their families. In 2012, the LTVP+ was introduced for such couples who have been married for at least 3 years or have a child who is a SC (subject to other eligibility criteria). The renewable LTVP+ is valid for 3 to 5 years, which gives these foreign spouses more certainty of stay. Non-resident spouses who are on LTVP or LTVP+ can apply for a Letter of Consent or Pre-Approved Letter of Consent to work and support their family. The LTVP+ also extends non-resident spouses healthcare subsidies for in-patient services in acute and community hospitals at a level similar to Permanent Residents at public healthcare institutions.

126. The Government has reviewed our policies to ensure that non-resident spouses who are particularly vulnerable, including spouses who are widowed, undergoing divorce proceedings or have divorced their SC spouses, as well as those who are victims of family violence and have young SC children, are able to remain in Singapore on long-term immigration facilities to care for their children. ICA would generally facilitate their continued stay in Singapore, as long as they do not have any adverse records, to allow them to care for their SC children. ICA works closely with MSF to follow up on appeals from such spouses and to assess the merits of each case. The individuals can also approach community agencies, Social Service Offices and Family Service Centres for financial help and social support.

D. Children deprived of a family environment (Article 20)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 32(b), (d), (e), (f)]

127. As children develop best in a family-based environment, kinship and foster care are preferred options for children who are unable to remain safely with their birth families, rather than residential care. MSF and NGOs work with the children and their families towards safe reunification whenever possible.

128. The Government has stepped up efforts to recruit more foster parents and continues to review ways to expand family-based care options. Such placement rates have improved over the last 10 years, with an increased proportion of children in family-based care from 41% in 2013 to 66% in 2023.

129. To better support foster parents, the monthly fostering allowance was increased in September 2022 from S\$936 to S\$1,100 for each child fostered and from S\$1,114 to S\$1,500 for each child with special needs or chronic medical needs. The increase in fostering allowance for children with special needs or chronic medical needs will better support their therapy, intervention, and transport needs. The fostering allowance is intended to help foster families defray out-of-pocket costs of caring for a foster child.

130. Where kinship and foster care are unavailable, children will reside in community-based Children's Homes and institutions designated as Places of Safety. In 2018, MSF commissioned restructuring works to transform Children's Homes into smaller, family-like environments, similar to what they would experience at home. The restructuring efforts, completed in 2023, aim to provide better care to children with higher and more complex needs, and provide them with common and dedicated

spaces for interaction and enrichment activities. These homes adopt a trauma-informed approach to create a supportive environment for the children. The children receive counselling, clinical interventions, family work and wraparound services by community partners to support their care needs and reunification with their families.

131. Children in need of protection who are placed in institutions are housed separately from children in conflict with the law given their different profiles and needs. There are communal activities where both groups of children will intermingle, such as during education classes and group programmes. During these times, there is strict supervision and close monitoring by staff and measures to actively manage the risk of negative influences, while also promoting positive change. Staff are trained to spot early signs of tension or undesirable activities, and would constructively engage the children to address risk factors and guide them towards prosocial behaviours.

132. The Government also prevents the stigmatisation of children in state care (including foster or residential care). The CYPA dictates that information relating to a child in state care is kept confidential, unless information sharing is authorised by the Director-General of Social Welfare or an appointed protector. Any person who contravenes this provision would be guilty of an offence and liable for conviction to a fine not exceeding S\$2,000.

E. Periodic review of placement (Article 25)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 32(c)]

133. Independent review committees review cases of children placed in Children's Homes and foster care. These committees and their duties are legislated. The CYPA established the Review Board in 2011, and it was amended in 2019 to establish the Committee on Fostering. These committees, consisting of a range of professionals from relevant fields such as education, child psychology, psychiatry, medicine, and social services, regularly review the cases of children under state care to ensure that they are well-taken care of and have proper care plans.

134. Social workers conduct regular planned and/or unannounced home visits to see and speak to the foster children, to ensure that they are well cared for. The Review Board members also regularly visit the Children's Homes to check on the well-being of the children and review their living conditions.

F. Adoption (Article 21)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 33]

135. See paragraph 16 for details on the newly enacted ACA which took effect in October 2024.

136. In 2022, MSF set up a "Registry of Adoptable Children", a database of children under state care who are eligible for adoption. This will track the adoption status of such children and facilitate matching between these children and prospective adopters. In addition, in 2023, an Adoption Selection Committee comprising psychology, psychiatry and social professionals was set up to independently assess and provide its opinion to MSF on the suitability of matches between prospective adopters and children under state care.

G. Illicit transfer and non-return (Article 11)

137. Singapore acceded to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction in December 2010. The International Child Abduction Act 2010, which implements the 1980

Hague Convention, came into effect in March 2011. MSF has been designated as the Central Authority to oversee trans-border child abductions and to secure the prompt return of children to their country of habitual residence.

138. In line with Singapore’s commitment to protect the best interests of children, the Singapore Central Authority, as a neutral and administrative authority, focuses on engaging parents to voluntarily resolve the matter and return their children to the country of their habitual residence. The Singapore Central Authority further works with foreign central authorities towards a voluntary resolution of trans-border child abduction matters, conducts preliminary assessments on possible risks of harm to children, makes appropriate referrals to agencies, and provides arrangements for the safe return of children.

H. Recovery of maintenance for the child (Article 27, para 4)

139. In 2023, the Family Justice Reform Act was passed in Parliament which introduced a new Maintenance Enforcement Process. The Process is intended to deter non-payment of maintenance in family proceedings and make enforcement easier when there is non-payment.

140. MinLaw is in the process of setting up a new unit of Maintenance Enforcement Officers and will operationalise the Maintenance Enforcement Process in phases. This unit will conduct fact-finding on the parties’ financial situations and will be empowered to obtain financial information directly from specified third parties such as banks and certain Government agencies if the parties fail to provide the information. Officers from the unit will also conduct conciliation to help parties find amicable and feasible solutions. Respondents who cannot pay will be directed towards appropriate assistance, while respondents who refuse to pay can be dealt with more decisively by the Courts. These measures are intended to create more sustainable outcomes and reduce the need for repeat applications.

VIII. Disability, basic health and welfare

A. Children with disabilities (Article 23)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 35]

141. Singapore strives to be an inclusive and caring society to enable persons with disabilities to participate fully as integral and contributing members of society. Singapore’s disability policies are guided by our national roadmaps called Enabling Masterplans, which are collectively developed with the public and private sectors, including persons with disabilities and their caregivers. The first iteration was set out in 2007, and we are in its fourth iteration (“EMP2030”). EMP2030 sets out a collective vision for a more disability-inclusive Singapore in 2030 and seeks to comprehensively support and remove barriers for persons with disabilities across all stages of their lives. EMP2030 sets out concrete quantitative indicators and targets to measure progress towards achieving our 2030 goals.

Expanding early intervention support

142. It is important that children with varying needs receive the required support as early as possible to build a good foundation and develop their potential. To strengthen inclusivity in preschools, recommendations from the Inclusive Preschool Workgroup were implemented by ECDA. For example, all preschools are required to appoint inclusion coordinators, who will form the baseline support for children with developmental needs and signal that every preschool has an important role to play in strengthening inclusion.

143. For children requiring low levels of early intervention support within preschools, ECDA funds the provision of the Learning Support, Development Support and Development Support Plus

programmes.¹⁹ ECDA is on track to expand the Development Support-Learning Support Programme to cover 60% of preschoolers by 2025 and 80% at steady state.

144. For children requiring medium to high levels of early intervention support, ECDA is expanding capacity to cater to 80% of these children by 2027, up from 60% in 2022. This includes scaling up the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children and the Inclusive Support Programme, which help children access both early childhood education and early intervention services within a preschool.

Supporting the learning needs of persons with disabilities

145. Beyond preschools, MOE adopts a student-centred, needs-based approach to promote an inclusive quality and affordable education system with opportunities for all, including children with moderate to severe disabilities.²⁰

146. To support their diverse learning needs, a range of educational programmes and services are available in mainstream schools and Government and community-funded SPED schools. About 80% of students with disabilities and SEN (about 6.5% of the school-aged population) are supported and fully included in mainstream schools, while the remaining 20% (about 2% of the school-aged population) who have higher support needs are in SPED schools that provide more intensive and specialised assistance and curriculum.

147. Mainstream schools are resourced to support inclusivity in education. Educational Psychologists work closely with schools to implement appropriate classroom and learning interventions to develop these students' learning, socio-emotional and behavioural needs. While all teachers receive basic training on SEN, each school has teachers who receive in-depth courses on inclusive education and pedagogical strategies to support diverse learning needs. Physical education lessons and outdoor education activities are adapted so that students with disabilities can participate meaningfully with their peers.

148. To foster a positive peer support culture among students for their peers with disabilities, MOE has introduced specific programmes such as the Circle of Friends²¹ in mainstream schools and emphasises the importance of respect and empathy for others, including those who are different from themselves. In addition, social service agencies and health organisations provide specialised services for students with physical/sensory and socio-emotional needs.

149. SPED schools provide either the national or a customised curriculum, with pedagogy delivered by trained SPED teachers, together with support from professionals such as psychologists, therapists and social workers. To facilitate purposeful and sustained interaction between students from SPED schools and their peers from mainstream schools, meaningful joint activities such as sports, camps and

¹⁹ Learning Support serves children assessed to need support with literacy, language, fine motor or social skills. Development Support serves children assessed to need therapy support. Development Support Plus serves children who have made progress under the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children and now require low levels of early intervention support.

²⁰ In schools' context, the term 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) refer to children with disabilities. Support is given to all children who may need additional help, including those who are suspected to have disability, i.e. pre-disability diagnoses.

²¹ Circle of Friends is a peer support intervention for students at risk of social-interaction difficulties in school contexts.

learning journeys are organised through School Partnerships.²² Annually, MOE collaborates with community partners such as Special Olympics Singapore and Sport Singapore to promote inclusivity in the community through shared sporting experiences between students with and without disabilities. For example, students from SPED and mainstream schools train together before they compete with other combined teams in the Play Inclusive event. These partnerships help students become more empathetic and inclusive, and enhance staff capabilities to foster inclusivity in schools.

150. Each IHL has a Disability Support Office that coordinates support for students with disabilities from pre-enrolment to graduation. The IHLs encourage self-advocacy and independence so that students with disabilities will be suitably prepared for work. For prospective students, the offices work with course managers and academic staff to provide course guidance. For enrolled students, the offices provide holistic support through in-class learning assistance, access arrangements and funding support to purchase education-related Assistive Technology devices and support services. The Disability Support Offices also collaborate with community and industry partners to organise internship placements, mentorship and job matching programmes to better prepare students with disabilities for the workforce.

151. Education is heavily subsidised for Singaporean children in all schools, including SPED schools, such that families pay only a small fraction of the cost of education. Singaporean children from lower-income families in SPED schools also have access to Government financial assistance schemes which fully cover school fees, the cost of textbooks and school attire, and provide subsidies for school meals and public transport fees. In addition, all SPED schools administer their own financial assistance schemes to those who require more support.

Awareness raising about persons with disabilities

152. The Government has been taking active steps to improve inclusivity and combat stigma towards persons with disabilities, including children. SG Enable, the focal agency for disability in Singapore, runs the ongoing *I'mable* public education initiative, which celebrates the capabilities of persons with disabilities and encourages all to take positive action to commit to building a more inclusive society and enabling lives. One such effort under *I'mable* is the UnAwkward campaign, which encourages the public to look beyond disability and to pledge to take action to end awkward interactions with persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities.

153. There are also ground-up efforts to improve inclusivity. The Purple Parade is Singapore's largest movement to support inclusion, raise awareness and celebrate abilities of persons with disabilities, including children. It is spearheaded by various organisations from the people, public and private sectors, including persons with disabilities who help organise the movement, and supported by the Central Singapore Community Development Council.

154. There are also domain-specific public education initiatives, such as in transport. The Caring SG Commuters Committee was set up in 2020 to transform Singapore's commuter culture into one that is more caring, welcoming, and inclusive. One initiative is the Caring Commuter Champion volunteer corps, where members of public sign up for training by SG Enable or through an online programme and learn how to assist commuters (including children) with different types of disabilities. The Committee

²² School Partnerships is a school-led partnership programme, where a planned and gradual approach seeks to develop self-confidence and the needed social-communication skills to foster successful interactions between students with disabilities and their peers.

also launched the “May I Have a Seat Please” card and lanyard that commuters with invisible conditions may use to alert fellow commuters that they would like a seat on public transport.

B. Survival and development (Article 6, para. 2), health and health services (Article 24)

155. Singapore prioritises making quality healthcare affordable and accessible to all, including children. Singapore continues to have a low under-five child mortality rate (per thousand resident live-births) of 2.5 as of 2023.

Preventive health

156. Singapore focuses on preventive health and has made significant efforts on immunisation and health screening. As part of the National Childhood Immunisation Schedule, school-based vaccination programmes in Singapore offer free vaccinations to children against various diseases, such as measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, and polio. The percentage of children aged two immunised against the aforementioned diseases is consistently over 95% annually. Under the Youth Preventive Health and Dental Services programme, health screening including vision and hearing screening, growth and development assessment, and medical check-ups, are conducted regularly to ensure the protection of the students’ health and early detection of health issues.

Mental health

157. Mental health education is a key feature in the CCE curriculum to strengthen the mental well-being and resilience of our students. The curriculum raises students’ awareness of mental well-being, and encourages self-care and early help-seeking behaviour. Peer support structures have also been established in schools and IHLs so that students look out for one another and alert a trusted adult if a peer is at risk of hurting themselves or others.

158. Schools and IHLs have referral systems to facilitate the early identification of students who need professional support from school counsellors. Students with more complex problems are referred to external agencies such as the REACH and Community Health Assessment Team, which work with school personnel to provide mental health assessments and interventions for students. The multidisciplinary REACH teams also provide training and support to schools, Family Service Centres, and NGOs to strengthen their ability to identify, manage, and if necessary, refer at-risk children with severe emotional and behavioural problems to REACH teams for intervention. Specialised Child Guidance Clinics run by the Institute of Mental Health also provide support to children with emotional or behavioural challenges.

159. Parents play a key role in supporting their children’s mental health. Under the National Mental Health and Well-being Strategy, the Government launched “Parenting for Wellness” in September 2024. Parenting for Wellness contains bite-sized strategies that empower parents to build strong parent-child relationships, and strengthen their children’s mental well-being and emotional resilience. It also equips parents to parent effectively in a digital age and support their children’s digital journey.

Breastfeeding support [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 37]

160. Breastfeeding support is an area of priority for Singapore. MOH, HPB, and ABAS continue to work closely with maternity hospitals to encourage the BFHI-accreditation, which seeks to promote and support breastfeeding for the well-being of all mothers and babies. ABAS also conducts refresher sessions for hospitals that are already BFHI-accredited, and workshops to educate healthcare professionals on infant feeding and breastfeeding.

161. To raise public awareness on breastfeeding, the Breastfeeding Mothers Support Group was set up to provide support and develop educational resources for breastfeeding. HPB also disseminates essential breastfeeding information to parents through places frequented by nursing mothers (such as maternity hospitals and nursing rooms) and on HPB's online parenting portal. These initiatives enhance parents' comprehension of breastfeeding and its role in ensuring optimal child nutrition.

162. To foster a supportive environment in the workplace and community for breastfeeding, HPB works with ABAS to encourage and advise employers on the establishment of breastfeeding-friendly workplace policies, such as the setting up of lactation rooms, providing training for workplace mentors to support breastfeeding mothers and training of polyclinic nurses and doctors in the community to provide breastfeeding support for mothers.

163. The Government is in the process of drafting legislation on workplace fairness. In 2023, the Government accepted the recommendations of the Tripartite Committee on Workplace Fairness, which was set up to develop and design legislation to prohibit workplace discrimination in respect of pregnancy (which covers women during pregnancy, including the period of statutory maternity leave, and those who are breastfeeding). As Singapore is still in the preliminary stages of working towards implementing the recommendations, the Government does not have plans to ratify the International Labour Organization's Maternity Protection Convention since Singapore has a consistent policy of considering the ratification of an international treaty only when we can comply with it fully in law and in practice.

C. Reproductive health rights and adolescent health

Sexuality education [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 36]

164. Sexuality education, which is part of CCE, teaches students age-appropriate knowledge to understand themselves, maintain healthy relationships, and make wise, informed, and responsible decisions on sexuality matters. Students learn about contraception and the consequences of, and protection against, sexually-transmitted infections and human immunodeficiency virus. Students are also informed of ways to prevent infection, where to seek help and treatment, and are discouraged from risky sexual behaviours.

165. MOE's sexuality education curriculum also helps students to understand what biological sex, gender identity and sexual orientation mean, and to treat others with respect and empathy regardless of their gender identity and sexual orientation. Students learn not to make generalisations based on gender and learn that individual understandings of gender roles should not be limited by stereotypes. Students are also taught to evaluate views towards themselves and others, with regard to gender differences and stereotypes.

166. School counsellors provide support to students with sexuality issues, to reduce behavioural and health risks including from possible bullying. School counsellors, teachers and schools are supported with resources, training, and help channels from MOE.

Promoting healthy lifestyles

167. Singapore promotes healthy lifestyles for children through various initiatives and policies aimed at fostering physical activity, balanced nutrition, and overall well-being. The school curriculum and school environment seek to cultivate healthy habits in children from a young age, including building in the importance of healthy lifestyle choices and regular access to physical education. This is supported

by access to a wide range of community-based healthy lifestyle activities through national and community organisations.

D. Measures to protect children from substance abuse (Article 33)

168. In Singapore, we take a firm zero-tolerance stance on drugs. Based on the Health and Lifestyle Survey conducted in 2022, Singapore has a low drug prevalence rate of 0.7% or 1 in 143 residents abuse drugs. This relatively safe drug-free environment for our children and families is made possible by our comprehensive drug control policies.

Preventive Drug Education

169. Harm Prevention forms the core of Singapore's anti-drug approach, in which PDE is the cornerstone of our strategy to tackle the drug problem. To spread the anti-drug message, CNB, Singapore's lead agency for drug enforcement, and PDE ensures that the public have access to science-based narratives through school-based education and engagement, social media, media campaigns and public events.

170. CNB offers a range of PDE activities and programmes including talks, sharing sessions, skits, exhibitions and a video competition to engage and educate students. CNB works with MOE to ensure that all schools and IHLs conduct at least one PDE programme annually. In 2023, CNB also conducted a total of 73 and 20 PDE engagements with IHLs and National Service agencies respectively. In 2023, 80.61% (266 out of 330) of all primary and secondary schools participated in at least one PDE programme.

Interagency effort towards a drug-free Singapore

171. CNB supports the National Committee on Prevention, Rehabilitation and Recidivism, which oversees national efforts to prevent offending, re-offending, and enhance rehabilitation for drug offenders. CNB co-chaired the Project Team on Preventing Substance Abuse Amongst Youths with HPB and worked with the different stakeholders to develop a set of recommendations aimed at reducing substance abuse amongst children. This involved leveraging Government platforms and community voices to amplify public education efforts on the harms and legality of substance abuse, and sensitising parents to issues relating to substance abuse. The recommendations were announced at the Conversations on Youth 2023.

172. The use of e-vaporisers is banned in Singapore. HSA remains vigilant in monitoring and targeting illicit sales of e-vaporisers on online platforms, such as e-commerce and social media platforms, collaborating with platforms owners to remove illegal postings. There are also efforts to encourage platform owners to enhance online detection and removal of such sales and advertisements. At the community level, HSA works with various agencies to enforce against possession and use of e-vaporisers in public places areas and schools. MOE takes a firm stand against vaping and takes disciplinary actions in educational institutions for those caught with e-vaporisers.

173. The National Addictions Management Service provides counselling and addictions management for youths in youth homes and conducts various educational initiatives to raise awareness and prevent substance abuse among the youth.

174. To ensure that our strategy remains sustainable, there is a need to leverage Government networks and strengthen community partnership efforts with youths, parents, and the community. In May 2023, a new Inter-Ministry Committee on Drug Prevention for Youths was formed to focus on drug prevention efforts among children. The Inter-Ministry Committee sets the overall direction for strategies, programmes and interventions, through the development of drug prevention of youths

workplans by the respective domain agencies, to ensure that our youths embrace a drug-free lifestyle, and to realise our vision of a drug-free Singapore.

Amendments to Misuse of Drugs Act

175. Over the years, the Misuse of Drugs Act has been enhanced to address concerns regarding children being targeted or exposed to drugs deliberately. In 2013, amendments were introduced to impose enhanced punishments against adults who (a) supply drugs to a young or vulnerable person (under 21 years of age for Singapore); or (b) recruit a young or vulnerable person for drug trafficking activities. In 2019, amendments were passed to provide for better protection of children and young persons. It is now an offence for an adult who possesses illicit drugs, knowing that a child (under 16 years of age for Singapore) is likely to be present in a place, to knowingly or recklessly leave drugs or drug utensils within easy access of the child. It is also an offence for an adult to permit or not take reasonable steps to prevent a young person (under 21 years of age for Singapore) from consuming illicit drugs in the adult's possession. The Act stipulates a maximum imprisonment of 10 years for first-time convictions and a mandatory minimum imprisonment of two years, up to a maximum of 10 years, for repeat convictions.

E. Social security (Article 26)

176. Refer to our previous report for details on Singapore's Central Provident Fund and the schemes for which children are eligible,²³ as well as the ComCare Endowment Fund for lower-income households.²⁴

177. In 2019, ComLink was introduced to provide comprehensive, convenient and coordinated support to families with children living in public rental housing. MSF officers and community partners proactively reached out to lower income families with children living in public rental housing to assess their needs, and refer them to help agencies as needed. This represented a shift beyond episodic social assistance to longer-term, family-centric support that recognises and boosts families' agency to take charge of their goals and progress towards stability, self-reliance and social mobility.

178. In 2023, ComLink was enhanced to ComLink+. Lower-income families with children who are not in public rental housing but face similar challenges are now included. Under ComLink+, dedicated family coaches work with families to co-develop action plans tailored to each family's needs, coach and motivate them towards achieving their goals, and take the lead to coordinate support across multiple programmes. Families will also be able to receive ComLink+ Progress Packages, which provide financial top-ups beyond what is needed for basic living needs, to augment the families' efforts to improve their longer-term outcomes and prospects. These packages supplement families' efforts in giving their children a good start in education starting from preschool, and working towards stable employment, debt clearance and saving for home ownership.

F. Standard of living (Article 27, para. 1-3)

179. Children in Singapore enjoy a high standard of living and quality of life. As at mid-2023, Singapore ranked 30th worldwide on the Numbeo's Quality of Life Index²⁵ which measures indices from safety, healthcare, cost of living, and pollution.

²³ CRC/C/SGP/4-5: p. 28-29, para. 141.

²⁴ CRC/C/SGP/4-5: p. 29, para. 142.

²⁵ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/standard-of-living-by-country>.

180. In addition to ensuring that our children have access to clean water and sanitation (paragraph 62), the Government also ensures their access to clean air. Singapore regularly reviews our air emission standards and adopts tight emission requirements based on the European Union, Japanese and United States emission standards and test methods. During episodes of transboundary smoke haze where 24-hour Pollutant Standards Index readings enter the “unhealthy” range (i.e. >100), the Government’s Haze Task Force develops and implements plans to manage the impact of haze on all segments of society, with special attention to vulnerable groups such as children. For example, all classrooms in primary and secondary schools, MOE Kindergartens, and SPED schools are equipped with air purifiers to ensure the well-being of students during a haze episode. Preschools are similarly required to ensure that there are sufficient air purifiers and to identify students and children with pre-existing conditions that may make them more susceptible to the effects of haze.

181. To protect children from dengue, NEA works with MOE to ensure that vector control measures are in place at all schools, and that potential mosquito breeding habitats are detected early and removed. In cases of dengue outbreak, NEA partners schools located in dengue areas of concern to distribute mosquito repellent and educational materials to students.

IX. Education, leisure and cultural activities

A. Provision of quality education (Articles 28 and 29)

182. Primary school education is compulsory for SCs under the Compulsory Education Act. Enrolment and completion rates are high, and we have achieved near-universal completion of secondary education, with over 97% of each Primary 1 cohort progressing to a post-secondary education institution.

183. Singapore places great importance on preparing our students to be future-ready learners who learn for life. Singapore’s education system emphasises holistic development for our students, provides different pathways that cater to their diverse interests, strengths, and learning needs, and continues to perform well in international benchmarking studies such as OECD’s PISA.

184. In the PISA 2022 results, Singapore emerged as the top-performing education system in Reading, Mathematics, and Science of 81 participating systems, with our 15-year-old students having demonstrated strong ability in applying thinking and reasoning processes to solve complex real-world problems. They also found that our students from less advantaged backgrounds not only outperformed their international counterparts of similar socio-economic backgrounds, but did better than the OECD average in all core domains. Additionally, 43% of our students from less advantaged backgrounds were “core-skills resilient” (OECD average: 19%), the 2nd highest proportion among participating systems in PISA 2022.

A good start for every child

185. Singapore believes strongly in ensuring that every child has a good start in life. See Section VII for the Government’s efforts to enhance affordability and quality of preschool services in the early childhood sector.

Review of academic system [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 39]

186. As a society, Singapore has been encouraging broader definitions of success. Since 2019, MOE has made efforts to move away from an over-emphasis on academic achievements and shift the mindsets of parents, students, and teachers towards a more holistic education system that nurtures lifelong

learners. One such example is the implementation of Full SBB in secondary schools in 2024, giving students greater flexibility to study more subjects at different levels that suit their interests, aptitudes, and learning needs. Prior to its implementation, MOE consulted educators and students and conducted pilots to refine the plans.

187. From 2019 to 2024, MOE also progressively removed mid-year examinations for all primary and secondary levels, and junior colleges. This has freed up time in the school calendar to enable better-paced teaching, learning and holistic development.

188. Over the years, MOE has expanded DSA – an alternative admission mechanism to secondary schools and junior colleges that recognises students’ diverse talents (e.g. sports, performing arts) which cannot be demonstrated at the national exams. The application process has also been simplified so that students can submit one application through a centralised online portal instead of applying separately to multiple schools. In 2023, 12% of students progressed to secondary schools through the DSA, compared to 9% in 2019.

189. MOE has also broadened the definition of merit beyond academic achievements in post-secondary admissions. Aptitude-Based Admissions into polytechnics and the Institute of Technical Education were expanded to allow more students to apply for early admission prior to taking the national exams. Our autonomous universities also practise Aptitude-Based Admissions, which takes into account a fuller range of an individual’s aptitude and attributes alongside academic merit.

190. The Government continues to address concerns about the excessive reliance on tuition, which reduces students’ time to explore other interests, generate unnecessary academic load and erode the joy of learning. The larger policy shifts mentioned above also seek to address this concern by targeting the underlying drivers for tuition such as the over-emphasis on academic grades. Nonetheless, a long-term partnership between MOE, parents, and the wider community is required to enact a societal mindset shift. Collectively, the above efforts inculcate positive learning dispositions in our children and recognise their diverse strengths and abilities.

Human rights education [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 40]

191. Singapore’s education system and national curriculum is student-centric and values-driven. As mentioned earlier, CCE focusses on nurturing sound values, developing character, socio-emotional well-being and citizenship dispositions in our students from the primary to post-secondary levels. This is complemented by activities such as Racial Harmony Day, which is commemorated annually in all schools to reinforce the importance of racial and religious harmony and social cohesion in Singapore.

192. The History and Social Studies curricula include topics that examine the consequences of prejudice and discrimination. Through the study of specific societies, events and issues, students learn about the importance of respecting individuals for their differences, upholding peace and maintaining harmony in diverse societies. In Social Studies, upper secondary school students explore the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a country through different examples. For instance, they learn about children having the rights and access to quality education, regardless of their family background and the efforts made by different stakeholders in Singapore to support them. Students are also encouraged to appreciate the diversity that makes up the society that they live in and reflect on their roles and responsibilities in promoting and building an inclusive and harmonious society.

B. Rest, play, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities (Article 31)

Opportunities for every child

Art and culture

193. Learning about arts and culture is an important component of our education curriculum for children of all ages. For all school-going children, apart from at least eight years of arts education provisions in schools, NAC drives artist-led learning experiences to complement the arts curriculum and co-curriculum outcomes for schools. For example, under the NAC-Arts Education Programme, NAC curates more than 1,600 artist-led programmes by over 300 artists and arts education providers. Fees for these programmes are subsidised to widen access to good quality arts programmes. Currently, over 90% of the schools under MOE take up the programme annually.

194. To ensure inclusive access to quality early arts and cultural experiences, NAC and the National Heritage Board work closely with MOE to implement cohort-level learning experiences which offer students authentic, learning opportunities at professional arts and cultural venues. Two core learning experiences – (a) Museum Based Learning and (b) Performing Arts Based Learning are designed to foster students’ sense of identity, community, and connection with our shared culture and heritage.

195. The School of the Arts is Singapore’s national pre-tertiary specialised arts school with an integrated arts and academic curriculum for children aged 13 to 18. The University of the Arts Singapore, founded on an alliance of Singapore’s arts institutions, LASALLE College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, had its first intake in August 2024 to support the diverse aspirations of Singapore’s youth at the tertiary level.

196. There is also a wide range of arts and heritage events and programmes offered by our key cultural institutions, museums and practitioners that can be enjoyed by families, children and youth. These include festival programming targeted at children, such as National Gallery Singapore’s Children’s Biennale, National Heritage Board’s Children Season, as well as arts experiences and activities for children in community spaces. Notably, Singapore opened its Children’s Museum in 2022, with dedicated content for children aged 12 and below.

197. There are also ongoing efforts to make our cultural facilities more inclusive and accessible to children of all abilities. For example, some of our cultural institutions and museums have dedicated sensory rooms that support young visitors, especially those on the autism spectrum, during their visits. Our cultural institutions also work closely with community access partners to introduce inclusive programming for children and youth with special needs and disabilities.

Sports

198. Physical Education is an integral component of Singapore’s school curriculum to develop students holistically. Through Physical Education lessons, students participate in a variety of sports and are encouraged to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. Beyond Physical Education lessons, schools provide Physical Sports Co-Curricular Activities to develop students’ sport skills and character. To support youths’ athletic aspirations, ActiveSG sports academies offer training programmes for various sports such as swimming, tennis, badminton, and basketball. These academies aim to provide quality coaching and training opportunities for individuals of all ages and skill levels, particularly young children, to develop their sport skills and achieve their fitness goals. The programmes are conducted by experienced coaches and trainers, who provide guidance and support to help participants improve their skills and performances in their chosen sport.

C. Children belonging to indigenous and minority groups (Article 30)

199. We refer to Part C of Section V on civil rights and freedom to reiterate that Singapore places great emphasis on combating discrimination and preserving harmony as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society.

Equal opportunities for children in minority groups [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 42]

200. Article 152 of the Constitution provides that “it shall be the responsibility of the Government to constantly care for the interests of the racial and religious minorities in Singapore”. Article 152 also recognises the Government’s responsibility to protect, safeguard, support, foster and promote the Malay language and the political, educational religious, economic, social and cultural interests of Malays. The Government cares for the needs of minority groups by using existing mechanisms to consult minority groups on policies that could affect them.

201. Meritocracy, a fundamental principle in Singapore, ensures that all Singaporeans can progress based on individual merit and without discrimination based on race, language, or religion. Ethnic minorities have been closing the educational attainment gap with the majority Chinese community since 1980. More minorities have completed the O-Levels with at least five passes and more have progressed to post-secondary education. This points to the levelling effect of meritocracy in Singapore, where students can succeed on their own merit, regardless of race or socio-economic background.

202. As reported in our initial report on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,²⁶ Singapore has five ethnic-based Self-Help Groups²⁷ which provide assistance to lower-income persons and families. Funded by the Government and voluntary contributions from the respective ethnic communities, these Groups provide community-based assistance that complements national schemes. These Groups were established based on the principle that progress is best achieved by the community itself, who would know its own needs. Regardless of their ethnic affiliations, the Groups collaborate effectively to promote racial cohesion and uplift society as a whole.

X. Special protection measures

A. Economic exploitation of children, including child labour (Article 32)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 43]

203. There have not been any reported cases of economic child exploitation in Singapore. The EA was amended in 2004 to raise the minimum age of employment from 12 to 13 years, in line with the International Labour Organization Convention No. 138. Children aged 13 to 15 are permitted to work to gain skillsets and support family-run businesses. There are strict regulations and protection relating to the type of work they can undertake, their hours of work and their employment conditions under the Employment (Children and Young Persons) Regulations. For instance, children are not allowed to work in an industrial setting, unless they are working with family members. Work in non-industrial settings is also limited to light duties only and must be suited to the capacity of the child as certified by a medical officer. They are also not allowed to work more than 3 hours without a 30-minute work break, or more

²⁶ CERD/C/SGO/1: p. 28-29, para. 7.45 and 7.46.

²⁷ The five Groups are the Association of Muslim Professionals, the Chinese Development Assistance Council, the Eurasian Association, the Singapore Indian Development Association, and Yayasan MENDAKI.

than 6 hours in a day. If the child is attending school, the total period of time spent on school and work cannot exceed 6 hours in a day.²⁸

204. Even as children are permitted to work from age 13, the dropout rate at secondary school is very low at less than 1% of each cohort over the last 10 years. The low drop-out rate is due to the strong support provided by schools, such as engaging students of all abilities in learning and the various financial assistance schemes to ensure students from lower-income families remain in schools. Schools also work with community partners to encourage youths-at-risk to re-engage with their schools and community.

B. Sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking (Articles 34 and 35)

Firm stance against human trafficking [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 44]

205. Singapore is committed to combatting TIP. Strict border control measures, tough laws and a well-documented workforce have contributed to the low number of TIP cases in Singapore, including those pertaining to child TIP victims.

206. The PHTA was enacted in 2015. Under the PHTA, the TIP offence is defined based on an internationally accepted definition under the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (UN TIP Protocol). For cases where the victim is a child, only the two limbs of Act and Purposes need to be fulfilled for the case to be considered a human trafficking offence (the third limb of Means need not be fulfilled). Cases which do not meet the definition of the TIP offence can be prosecuted under other statutes such as the WC, the Penal Code, the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act, the Employment Agencies Act or the EA.

207. Under the PHTA, enforcement powers are granted to enforcement officers who deal with TIP cases to detain and search, without a warrant, any subject who is suspected of being involved in TIP. Since the PHTA came into force, 13 cases have been prosecuted under the Act, with 10 successful convictions. The number of investigations of new alleged TIP cases in Singapore has been low, with 25 cases in 2022 and 23 cases in 2023. This can be largely attributed to our upstream prevention measures and strong law enforcement framework.

Inter-agency TIP Taskforce

208. The Singapore Inter-Agency Taskforce on TIP implements holistic, coordinated strategies to combat TIP more effectively, with the National Approach against TIP setting out the key strategies and desired outcomes to guide the Taskforce and stakeholders when developing workplans to combat TIP.

209. The Taskforce works closely with local NGOs to spread awareness on TIP, alert enforcement agencies of potential TIP cases, and assist victims. In addition, enforcement agencies conduct regular operations on activities that are TIP-linked and have established channels to facilitate reporting of TIP cases. There is also a dedicated telephone hotline and email address for the public to report and submit information on TIP cases. Enforcement agencies also work closely with overseas law enforcement agencies and foreign embassies to share information and follow-up on TIP cases.

Training of frontline officers to identify and protect victims

²⁸ Unless the child is employed upon work carried on in any Government or other technical school, or under any approved apprenticeship scheme.

210. Singapore continues to focus on the training of frontline and enforcement officers to improve our effectiveness in detecting and investigating potential trafficking cases. There are protocols in place to guide frontline officers in identifying potential victims during routine enforcement at checkpoints.

211. Appropriate assistance is rendered to victims of trafficking. The Government, in partnership with NGOs, provide victims of trafficking with a range of services which includes the provision of food, shelter, counselling services and medical care.

212. Singapore continues to actively participate in international training to learn best practices in combating TIP, including the sexual exploitation of children. We also partner with foreign Governments and partners such as INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Group of Friends against TIP, overseas law enforcement agencies and foreign embassies to tackle TIP at the global level.

C. Children in street situations

213. Singapore generally does not have children living on the streets as we have a strong social support system. See Section IV Part C and Section VIII Part E for information on how we support families in their child-raising journey.

D. Other forms of exploitation (Article 36)

214. Singapore reviews our laws regularly to ensure that they remain up to date in protecting children from all forms of exploitation. There have been no new forms of exploitation of children that Singapore has encountered which require additional intervention from the Government.

E. Children in conflict with the law (Article 40)

215. For child offenders with higher risks and needs, the Court may choose to rehabilitate them in a Government Youth Home. Such a home is staffed with teachers trained by MOE and provides the same educational curriculum as schools in the community, with the aim of helping children transit smoothly back to their schools. Vocational training is provided to children who intend to seek employment after their residential stay. Psychological therapy and counselling services are also provided based on their risks and needs, in addition to efforts aimed at strengthening familial relationships. In addition, post-care support of up to 12 months is available for children leaving the Government Youth Home to support them in their reintegration into the community.

Revised minimum age of criminal responsibility [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 46(a)]

216. The MACR has been raised from seven to 10 years with effect from July 2020. Children above the MACR but below 12 years, who have not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequence of his or her conduct at the time of his or her offence, will not be held criminally responsible. Alongside this legislative amendment, various Government agencies have developed a framework to address the offending behaviour of children below the MACR or who are between the MACR and 12 years but are unable to understand the nature and consequences of their conduct. This framework strengthens the referral processes between agencies and ensures that the child and/or parent/guardian receive adequate intervention to address any behaviour of concern, even if criminal liability is not imposed.

F. Children deprived of their liberty, including any form of detention, imprisonment or placement in custodial settings (Article 37 (b) – (d))

Pre-trial detention of children [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 46(f)]

217. Children below the MACR will not be subject to any pre-trial detention. For cases involving children above the MACR which are undergoing court proceedings, the Courts offer bail with their parents as sureties, with the Court making sure that bail is made on the same day. If bail cannot be made on the same day for some reason, the Court will enquire as to whether there are other persons such as adult siblings, grandparents, other relatives or guardians who can stand bail.

218. On the rare occasion that a child is unable to be released on bail, any pre-trial detention is subject to regular reviews by a judge.

G. The sentencing of children, in particular the prohibition of capital punishment and life imprisonment (Article 37(a))

Rehabilitation of children under life imprisonment [CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 46(c) and (d)]

219. Life imprisonment is only for extremely grave crimes, such as murder or culpable homicide not amounting to murder. Whether an offender is sentenced to life imprisonment depends on the facts of the case and the charge brought in Court. Such a sentence may be necessary for the purposes of deterrence and to reflect society's views on particularly heinous offences. In practice, life imprisonment is used judiciously. Offenders sentenced to life imprisonment will be reviewed for suitability for release after serving 20 years of their sentence and at intervals not exceeding 12 months each thereafter (if not released earlier). There are also additional safeguards for children under 16. If a child below 16 years is convicted of murder, culpable homicide, or voluntarily causing grievous hurt, the Court may sentence the child to be detained for such period as specified by the Court if the Court finds that no other method for dealing with the case (e.g. reformatory training or detention in a juvenile rehabilitation centre) is suitable. A child so detained may, at any time, be released by the Minister of Social and Family Development on licence. Such a sentence differs from a sentence of imprisonment for a person over the age of 16 and allows for a more calibrated response to offending by children.

220. SPS adopts the evidence-informed Risk-Need-Responsivity model to guide its rehabilitation of children under life imprisonment. Rehabilitation efforts are proportionate to the risk of re-offending and consider the child's needs and responsivity, tailoring the intervention to the learning style, motivation, abilities and strengths of the child.

221. Offenders undergo targeted rehabilitation programmes based on their identified risk factors and assessed needs. Some of these programmes include psychology-based correctional programmes, vocational skills training programmes, academic programmes and religious programmes. Family-based programmes are also conducted to strengthen family bonds to better support the offenders' rehabilitation. Prior to their transition into the community, they would have access to support such as case management services and befrienders who foster a mentoring relationship with offenders. After the offenders are released, these volunteers and community partners continue to engage them, to ensure that they continue to have access to positive social and support networks within the community.

222. In addition to the Risk-Need-Responsivity model, SPS is also informed by desistance research, which recognises that individuals may go through several attempts of failures and successes before they stop offending and are able to maintain a crime-free life, i.e. sustain their desistance. The research on successful desistance highlights the need to focus rehabilitation and reintegration efforts on factors that

contribute to long-term abstinence from criminal behaviour such as building a strong social support system, rebuilding family relationships and improving their skills to reduce the risk of reoffending. SPS has started incorporating elements of desistance theory into the design of its rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives.

H. Training activities for professionals in youth justice system

223. See paragraphs 33 and 34.

I. Asylum-seeking and refugee children (Article 22)

224. There have been no cases of unaccompanied children, asylum-seeking, or refugee children in Singapore in recent years. As a small, densely populated country with limited land, Singapore is not in a position to accept persons seeking political asylum or refugee status. Singapore is not party to any convention on refugees, including the 1951 Convention on Refugees. Nonetheless, Singapore respects the principle of non-refoulement to the extent that it forms part of customary international law. We may provide humanitarian assistance on compassionate grounds. When organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are willing to offer assistance, we may work with these organisations to provide humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers and refugees, and help ensure their safe departure to a third country within an acceptable timeframe.

XI. Ratification of international human rights instruments

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 50]

225. Singapore engages seriously with treaty bodies, fulfils our treaty obligations judiciously, reviews reservations where appropriate, and welcomes the sharing of knowledge on implementing human rights among UN Member States.

226. Singapore ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in October 1995, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2013 and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in November 2017. Singapore also underwent our third Universal Periodic Review in May 2021, and will undergo our fourth Universal Periodic Review in 2026.

227. Singapore acceded to the UN TIP in September 2015.

228. Singapore's Inter-Ministry Committee on Human Rights regularly reviews Singapore's ability to ratify additional human rights treaties. While Singapore may not be party to certain human rights treaties, our domestic policies are generally in compliance with the substance of these treaties.

XII. Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

A. Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (Article 38)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 48]

229. The minimum age for compulsory enlistment into the SAF is 18 years, while the minimum age of voluntary enlistment is 16 years and 6 months. Voluntary early enlistment into the SAF under the Voluntary Early Enlistment Scheme is open to those who have completed their basic educational qualifications before turning 18 years old and would like to enlist for full-time National Service earlier, to enter the workforce or proceed for their university studies sooner. To safeguard the well-being of

early enlistees, MINDEF requires all early enlistees to go through a comprehensive series of assessments to ascertain that they are able to cope with training before enlistment. Thus, only a small number are enlisted each year under the Voluntary Early Enlistment Scheme. Early enlistees may request for release during the period of their volunteer service. We also take special care to ensure that our enlistees are aware of the available feedback channels, should they wish to voice their grievances and seek redress. The Government is committed to handle all feedback in a sensitive manner.

230. As proper discharge of military duties is critical to the security and stability of Singapore, the notification period of three months for leaving the volunteer force is necessary to ensure proper handing over of duties, and to allow sufficient time for a suitable replacement to be trained and deployed.

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction and Extradition

231. We have carefully considered the Committee's comments on amending our legislation. We note that the OPAC does not require Singapore to exercise extraterritorial jurisdictions for all offences under the OPAC. Additionally, Singapore has not received nor made any extradition or mutual legal assistance requests relating to offences under the OPAC thus far. Thus, we do not consider amendments to the relevant legislation necessary at this point in time.

B. Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC) (Articles 34, 35 and 36)

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 49]

232. Singapore is working towards ratifying the OPSC by 2026, with current efforts focused on having the necessary legislation and resources in place for implementing the relevant obligations.

C. Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure

[CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 49]

233. The Government has carefully considered the Committee's recommendation to ratify the OPIC but has no current plans to ratify it. To ensure that the rights of children are not being violated in Singapore, there is already an existing range of mechanisms, such as the judiciary and independent NGOs that work closely with children and handle their feedback (including complaints) in a manner that is sensitive to their needs. In addition, feedback from members of the public to the relevant Government agencies are dealt with accordingly. We will continue to ensure that there are sufficient feedback channels in place for concerns regarding the rights of children to be raised.