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**Human Rights Council**  
**Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**  
**Thirty-eighth session**  
3–14 May 2021

## **Compilation on Singapore**

### **Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

#### **I. Background**

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a compilation of information contained in reports of treaty bodies and special procedures and other relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

#### **II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies<sup>1, 2</sup>**

2. The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons looked forward to a positive outcome of the domestic process involving a review by the Interministerial Committee on Human Rights of the country's ability to accede to and ratify the international human rights treaties to which it was not yet party.<sup>3</sup>

3. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women encouraged the State to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.<sup>4</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child made a similar recommendation.<sup>5</sup>

4. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women encouraged the State to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.<sup>6</sup>

5. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State ratify the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on a communications procedure.<sup>7</sup>

6. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State withdraw its remaining reservations to articles 2, 11 and 16 within a clear time frame.<sup>8</sup>



7. The Committee on the Rights of the Child urged the State to reconsider its position not to withdraw any of its declarations to articles 12 to 17, 19 and 37 and reservations to articles 7, 9, 10, 22, 28 and 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>9</sup>
8. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State ratify the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization (ILO).<sup>10</sup>
9. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State consider ratifying the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183).<sup>11</sup>
10. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Government accede to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.<sup>12</sup>
11. UNHCR and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Government accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.<sup>13</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child made a similar recommendation.<sup>14</sup>
12. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) noted that the Government should be encouraged to ratify the Convention against discrimination in Education.<sup>15</sup>
13. UNESCO encouraged the Government to ratify the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.<sup>16</sup>
14. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State consider ratifying the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.<sup>17</sup>
15. The same Committee recommended that the State establish a standing government structure to coordinate and prepare reports to and engage with international and regional human rights mechanisms, and to coordinate and track national follow-up to and implementation of treaty obligations and the recommendations and decisions emanating from the mechanisms. It emphasized that such a structure should be adequately and continuously supported by dedicated staff and should have the capacity to consult systematically with civil society.<sup>18</sup>
16. Singapore made financial contributions to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.<sup>19</sup>

### **III. National human rights framework<sup>20</sup>**

17. The Independent Expert on older persons encouraged the Government to establish an independent national human rights institution in conformity with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).<sup>21</sup>
18. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State take immediate and concrete steps to establish an independent mechanism for monitoring human rights, including a specific mechanism for monitoring children's rights that is able to receive, investigate and address complaints by children in a child-sensitive manner. It also recommended that the State guarantee the independence of such a monitoring mechanism, including with regard to its funding, mandate and immunities, so as to ensure full compliance with the Paris Principles.<sup>22</sup>
19. The Committee recommended that the State develop a national plan of action for human rights education, as recommended in the framework of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.<sup>23</sup>

## **IV. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law**

### **A. Cross-cutting issues**

#### **1. Equality and non-discrimination<sup>24</sup>**

20. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State ensure compliance with article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by incorporating the principle of non-discrimination into its domestic legislation and conduct an in-depth revision of its legislation in order to fully guarantee non-discrimination in law and in practice, including the right to inheritance of children of unmarried parents and of girls covered by the Administration of Muslim Law Act.<sup>25</sup>

21. The Independent Expert on older persons noted that although the Constitution guaranteed equality for all persons, it did not explicitly recognize equality on the basis of sex.<sup>26</sup>

22. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reiterated its previous recommendations that the State incorporate into its Constitution or other appropriate legislation a definition of discrimination against women and provisions to prohibit all forms of discrimination against women, encompassing direct and indirect discrimination in the private and public spheres as well as intersecting forms of discrimination against women, in line with article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.<sup>27</sup>

23. The Independent Expert on older persons encouraged Singapore to incorporate a definition of discrimination against women encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination into its Constitution or other appropriate legislation, as well as provisions to prohibit discrimination against women, including on the grounds of age or disability.<sup>28</sup>

24. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State adopt a proactive and comprehensive strategy containing specific and well-targeted actions, including affirmative social actions, to eliminate discrimination against children in marginalized or vulnerable situations, including children without Singaporean citizenship, girls, children with disabilities, children of ethnic minorities, children of unmarried couples, children of same-sex couples and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children.<sup>29</sup>

25. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State ensure that lesbians, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons are effectively protected against all forms of discrimination in law and in practice, including by undertaking educational and awareness-raising campaigns to combat discriminatory stereotypes, including in its media policies.<sup>30</sup>

#### **2. Development, the environment, and business and human rights<sup>31</sup>**

26. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State establish a clear regulatory framework for companies operating in the State to ensure that their activities do not negatively affect human rights or endanger environmental and other standards, especially those relating to children's rights.<sup>32</sup>

### **B. Civil and political rights**

#### **1. Right to life, liberty and security of person<sup>33</sup>**

27. OHCHR urged the Government to immediately establish a moratorium on capital punishment. It welcomed the Government's decision to apply legislative changes to sentences related to some cases of murder and certain categories of drug trafficking. It called upon the Government to pursue more comprehensive death penalty reforms with the ultimate aim of abolishing the death penalty altogether.<sup>34</sup>

28. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was seriously concerned at the situation of children whose parents had been sentenced to death and urged the State to take the best interests of the child into consideration when issuing the death penalty. The Committee further recommended that the State provide psychological and other support necessary to children whose parents have been sentenced to death.<sup>35</sup>

29. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women remained concerned about the fact that corporal punishment continued to be legal under section 89 of the Penal Code, section 64 of the Women's Charter, section 27 of the Children and Young Persons (Licensing of Homes) Regulations 2011 and section 24 of the Children and Young Persons (Government Homes) Regulations 2011.<sup>36</sup>

30. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was deeply concerned that, despite repeated recommendations of international human rights mechanisms, including the Committee's previous recommendation, corporal punishment remained legal in all settings, except in early childhood development centres. It urged the State to adopt, without further delay, legislation explicitly and unconditionally prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings, namely in the home, at school, in alternative care settings and in the administration of justice.<sup>37</sup>

31. The same Committee was seriously concerned that children aged between 16 and 18 years were still treated as adults in the criminal justice system and may be sentenced to life imprisonment. It recommended that the State abolish the sentence of life imprisonment for children under the age of 18 and promptly review the files of all prisoners serving a life sentence for crimes committed when under 18 years of age, with a view to ensuring their early release.<sup>38</sup>

32. The Committee was also seriously concerned that there was no child-specific pretrial detention limit and recommended that the State ensure that pretrial detention of children is applied only as a measure of last resort and that its application is subject to strict time limitations and regular review by a judge.<sup>39</sup>

## **2. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law<sup>40</sup>**

33. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was seriously concerned that corporal punishment was a lawful sentence for male children over the age of 10. It recommended that the State prohibit and criminalize corporal punishment as a sentence for child offenders.<sup>41</sup>

34. The Committee urged the State to bring its juvenile justice system fully into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international standards. It recommended that the State consider regularly reviewing the Penal Code with a view to raising the age of criminal responsibility to an internationally accepted standard and give the child the benefit of the doubt when age is in dispute.<sup>42</sup>

35. The Independent Expert on older persons noted the general tendency of underreporting cases of violence and abuse involving older persons.<sup>43</sup>

36. The Independent Expert on older persons emphasized that further measures and independent mechanisms were urgently required to ensure that any form of violence against and abuse of older persons, including financial abuse, was detected, reported and adequately addressed.<sup>44</sup>

37. The Independent Expert on older persons stressed that additional normative measures and mechanisms were required to ensure detection, reporting and investigation of all forms of abuse and maltreatment of older persons in institutional care and in family settings. Training judges, lawyers and prosecutors was essential for ensuring the investigation of cases of violence against older persons and for signalling to the community that violence and abuse against older persons were serious crimes and would be treated as such.<sup>45</sup>

## **3. Fundamental freedoms<sup>46</sup>**

38. The Committee on the Rights of the Child echoed its earlier concern that the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly were severely restricted in the State and subject to undue limitations.<sup>47</sup>

39. The Committee urged the State to review its laws and policies, in particular the Administration of Justice (Protection) Act and the Public Order Act, in order to ensure full respect for the rights and freedoms guaranteed to children under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and that any restrictions to those rights fully comply with international standards.<sup>48</sup>

40. OHCHR remained concerned about the extremely low threshold used by Singapore for the arrest and prosecution of those individuals peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of opinion and expression. It urged the Government to uphold its universal periodic review commitment of 2016 to ensure that freedom of opinion and expression and peaceful assembly are encouraged and protected in Singapore.<sup>49</sup>

41. UNESCO recommended that the Government decriminalize defamation and place it within a Civil Code that is in accordance with international standards.<sup>50</sup>

42. UNESCO encouraged the Government to abide by the principles of legality in the sense of narrow and predictable definitions within laws, as well as the principles of necessity and proportionality, and to review the sanctions under the 2019 Protection from the Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act.<sup>51</sup>

43. UNESCO stated that the Government should review the Administration of Justice (Protection) Act 2016, keeping in mind the principles of proportionality and necessity and ensuring that the Act does not interfere with the right to freedom of expression.<sup>52</sup>

44. UNESCO encouraged the Government to develop self-regulatory mechanisms of the media and to draft a comprehensive access to information law in accordance with international standards.<sup>53</sup>

#### **4. Prohibition of all forms of slavery<sup>54</sup>**

45. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women remained concerned that the State continued to be a destination and transit country for trafficking in women and girls for purposes of sexual and labour exploitation.<sup>55</sup>

46. The Committee also remained concerned about the lack of a definition, in the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act 2014, of key terms relating to trafficking, such as forced labour, deception and coercion, which hindered the effective identification of victims and perpetrators.<sup>56</sup>

47. The Committee recommended that the State ensure that traffickers and other actors involved in trafficking are effectively identified, prosecuted and adequately punished.<sup>57</sup>

48. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State ensure that all cases of sexual and labour exploitation, sale, abduction and trafficking are investigated and that the perpetrators are charged and punished.<sup>58</sup>

49. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State continue to provide capacity-building programmes to the judiciary, law enforcement officers, border control officers, social workers and health workers with respect to the early identification and referral of victims of trafficking, as well as gender-sensitive investigation methods.<sup>59</sup>

50. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State establish adequate and coordinated mechanisms to identify and protect child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation and that it strengthen the capacity of police officers, border guards and social workers to identify and protect child victims.<sup>60</sup>

51. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State ensure that victims of trafficking are provided with adequate protection and support, including by establishing separate, well-equipped shelters with trained staff to address their specific needs and concerns.<sup>61</sup>

52. UNHCR recommended that the Government continue and improve efforts to ensure proper investigation, prosecution and adequate sanctions in all cases of human trafficking, including through training of government officials, such as law enforcement officers and members of the judiciary. It also recommended that the Government allocate resources to

provide for adequate protection and other forms of assistance to victims and witnesses, including through the establishment and running of safe shelters.<sup>62</sup>

53. UNHCR further recommended that the Government establish within domestic legislation a referral mechanism for victims of trafficking who may be in need of international protection to gain access to a refugee status determination procedure.<sup>63</sup>

## 5. Right to privacy and family life<sup>64</sup>

54. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State undertake a comprehensive review of the Administration of Muslim Law Act, taking into account the experiences of other countries with populations of similar cultural backgrounds and with similar legal norms, to provide women with rights equal to those of men with regard to marriage, divorce and inheritance.<sup>65</sup>

55. The Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed the amendment to the Administration of Muslim Law Act raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 years, but was seriously concerned that subsection 96 (5) of that law still allowed girls that had attained puberty to get married in exceptional cases.<sup>66</sup>

56. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State intensify its efforts to discourage and prohibit polygamy.<sup>67</sup>

57. The same Committee recommended that the State ensure that women and men have equal rights to divorce, including with regard to grounds for divorce and standards of proof, and abolish the right of Muslim husbands to unilateral divorce (*talaq*).<sup>68</sup>

58. The Committee also recommended that the State guarantee the equal rights of women in all matters of inheritance and provide for the equal choice of adjudication between religious and civil law regimes.<sup>69</sup>

59. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State take legislative and policy measures to protect the right of the child to privacy, including by amending the Personal Data Protection Act to include special provisions regarding children and by strengthening the mechanisms for monitoring and prosecuting information and communications technology-related violations of children's rights.<sup>70</sup>

## C. Economic, social and cultural rights

### 1. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work<sup>71</sup>

60. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, while noting the increase in the minimum age for admission to employment from 12 to 13 years, was concerned that it was still below the compulsory school age. It recommended that the State raise the minimum age for admission to employment to the compulsory school-leaving age of 15 years.<sup>72</sup>

61. The Independent Expert on older persons stressed the need to ensure that appropriate frameworks existed to allow older persons to age with dignity, in particular with regard to re-employment terms. In that context, she also underlined the importance of guaranteeing a minimum wage, notably for those employed in low-income sectors.<sup>73</sup>

### 2. Right to social security<sup>74</sup>

62. The Independent Expert on older persons stated that the social protection philosophy of Singapore was based on self-reliance. She recalled that establishing or extending social security systems was a duty of States stemming directly from human rights norms and standards, in particular the right to social security and the right to an adequate standard of living.<sup>75</sup>

63. The Independent Expert on older persons stressed that more needed to be done to ensure that all older persons, irrespective of whether they had been employed, were financially secure in old age. She stated that the introduction of a non-contributory old-age pension would significantly contribute to the financial autonomy of older persons.<sup>76</sup>

### 3. Right to an adequate standard of living<sup>77</sup>

64. The Independent Expert on older persons was impressed to learn that Singapore had one of the highest gross domestic products in the world. She noted that the majority of households headed by retirees, however, had fallen into the lower-income groups and that most retirees relied on relatives, other forms of social support or their savings and returns from investment to meet a significant portion of their basic expenditure needs.<sup>78</sup>

### 4. Right to health<sup>79</sup>

65. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State modify the current school curricula to include age-appropriate education in sexual and reproductive health.<sup>80</sup>

66. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents.<sup>81</sup>

67. The Independent Expert on older persons emphasized that it was essential to make sure that health-care and social services reached older persons who lived alone and to prevent older persons from becoming socially isolated.<sup>82</sup>

### 5. Right to education<sup>83</sup>

68. UNESCO noted that while the Constitution contained some provisions on “rights in respect of education”, it did not enshrine comprehensively the right to education.<sup>84</sup>

69. UNESCO also noted that the Government should be encouraged to enshrine the right to education in the Constitution and legislation and to guarantee at least nine years of compulsory primary and secondary education, 12 years of free education and at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education.<sup>85</sup>

70. UNESCO further noted that school fees were different according to the nationality and the status of pupils.<sup>86</sup>

71. UNESCO noted that the Government should be encouraged to pursue its efforts towards gender equality in education to encourage girls to choose non-traditional fields of study and career paths.<sup>87</sup>

72. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State include segments on non-discrimination and equality in the mandatory school curriculum for children of all ages, adapt teaching materials and regularly train teachers accordingly.<sup>88</sup>

73. The same Committee recommended that the State strengthen the implementation of the policy of inclusive education in schools and increase the number of places in preschool for children with moderate to severe special educational needs, without discrimination of any kind.<sup>89</sup>

74. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State encourage girls to choose non-traditional fields of study and career paths, such as engineering, electronics and information technology, and take measures to eliminate traditional stereotypes and structural barriers, which may deter girls from enrolling in those fields.<sup>90</sup>

## D. Rights of specific persons or groups

### 1. Women<sup>91</sup>

75. The Independent Expert on older persons noted the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men within the family and in society at large. She stated that such stereotypes were not only a root cause of violence against women in the private and public spheres, but also placed women in a disadvantaged position, including in the labour market.<sup>92</sup>

76. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State revise its Penal Code and its Criminal Procedure Code to criminalize domestic

violence and marital rape specifically and ensure that the definition of rape includes any non-consensual sexual act.<sup>93</sup>

77. The Independent Expert on older persons called upon the Government to criminalize explicitly all acts of domestic violence.<sup>94</sup>

78. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State ease the burden of proof for married or divorced women applying for personal protection orders, and adopt measures to ensure that unmarried women are effectively protected from intimate partner violence, including by extending the applicability of personal protection orders.<sup>95</sup>

79. The Committee remained concerned about the underreporting of cases of gender-based violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence. It recommended that the State provide mandatory and recurring capacity-building programmes to members of the judiciary, lawyers and law enforcement officers, including forensic medical personnel, as well as legislators and health-care professionals, to equip them to apply relevant criminal law provisions strictly in cases of gender-based violence against women and to treat victims in a gender-sensitive manner.<sup>96</sup>

80. The Committee also recommended that the State apply temporary special measures, such as outreach or support programmes, targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion, quotas and numerical goals associated with time frames, in areas in which women continue to be underrepresented or disadvantaged, including public and political life and employment.<sup>97</sup>

81. The Committee further recommended that the State strengthen measures aimed at increasing the availability and accessibility of professional caregiver services to enable women to expand their role beyond caregiving and to combat discriminatory stereotypes about women's and men's roles in the family and in society.<sup>98</sup>

82. The Committee remained concerned that women continued to be underrepresented in ministerial posts, the judiciary, the police and the diplomatic service, in particular at decision-making levels.<sup>99</sup>

83. The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations noted that in 2017 the median gross monthly salary of women employed in the same occupational category as men was systematically lower than that of men, except for clerical support workers, among whom it was slightly higher.<sup>100</sup>

84. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State reduce the gender wage gap by regularly reviewing wages in sectors in which women are concentrated and by establishing effective monitoring and regulatory mechanisms for employment and recruitment to ensure that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is adhered to in all sectors.<sup>101</sup>

85. The ILO Committee of Experts asked the Government to continue to take measures to address the underlying causes of the gender wage gap, such as vertical and occupational gender segregation and stereotypes relating to the aspirations, preferences and abilities of women, including by encouraging girls and women to choose non-traditional fields of study and professions and promoting their access to jobs with career prospects and higher pay.<sup>102</sup>

86. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State ensure that victims of sexual harassment in the workplace have access to effective complaints procedures, protection measures and recourse to remedies.<sup>103</sup>

## 2. Children<sup>104</sup>

87. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State conduct campaigns aimed at raising awareness of the harmful effects of corporal punishment, with a view to changing the general attitude towards the practice, and involve children, parents, teachers and other persons working with or for children so as to promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline.<sup>105</sup>

88. The Committee urged the State to further strengthen and expand programmes and policies aimed at combating violence against children, including evidence-based positive parenting programmes.<sup>106</sup>

89. The Committee also urged the State to adopt a mandatory reporting protocol for child abuse and neglect.<sup>107</sup>

90. The Committee recommended that the State remove section 376A (4) from the Penal Code of 2019, which enabled a man to have sexual relations with a spouse under 16 years of age with the spouse's consent.<sup>108</sup>

91. The Committee also recommended that the State expeditiously investigate, in a child-friendly manner through a specialized multidisciplinary team, cases of sexual exploitation and abuse of children, prosecute perpetrators and punish those convicted with appropriate sanctions.<sup>109</sup>

92. The Committee urged the State to provide for alternative measures to institutionalization, such as temporary foster care and placement with extended family. It also urged the State to ensure periodic review of the placement of children in institutions and foster care and monitor the quality of care in such institutions and foster care, including by providing accessible channels for reporting, monitoring and remedying maltreatment of children.<sup>110</sup>

93. The Committee recommended that the State develop a standardized information system in order to facilitate analysis and cross-referencing of data, in particular with regard to cases involving child abuse, neglect, exploitation and sexual exploitation and children with disabilities.<sup>111</sup>

### **3. Persons with disabilities<sup>112</sup>**

94. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, while welcoming the inclusion of all children with moderate to severe special education needs in the Compulsory Education Act, remained concerned at the insufficient quantitative and qualitative data on children with disabilities and their needs, that some children with disabilities were still not fully included in the education system, the persistence of discriminatory attitudes and behaviours against children with disabilities and that non-Singaporean children with disabilities enjoyed less protection than their Singaporean peers.<sup>113</sup>

95. The Committee recommended that the State strengthen awareness-raising campaigns targeting government officials, the public and families to combat stigma attached to and prejudice against children with disabilities and promote a positive image of children with disabilities.<sup>114</sup>

96. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues urged the Government to provide sign language interpretation and captioning at all events and in all essential communications related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic intended for the general public, including the statements of the Prime Minister and of the Multi-Ministry Taskforce on COVID-19. They also called upon the State to provide essential information to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk related to COVID-19 in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities in a timely manner, such as Braille, Easy Read format, augmentative and alternative communication, to enable equal access to information for all persons with disabilities.<sup>115</sup>

97. The same Special Rapporteurs called upon Singapore to ensure the accessibility of health care and support services to all persons with disabilities during the pandemic without discrimination.<sup>116</sup>

**4. Minorities<sup>117</sup>**

98. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State strengthen its efforts to provide equal opportunities for children of minority groups, in particular the Malay, and that it remove all policies that disadvantage or discriminate against minorities.<sup>118</sup>

**5. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers<sup>119</sup>**

99. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women remained concerned about the lack of national asylum and refugee legislation and procedures, including for ensuring respect for the principle of non-refoulement, and that refugees and asylum seekers remained in detention until a durable solution was identified.<sup>120</sup>

100. UNHCR recommended that the Government formulate and enact national asylum legislation in cooperation with UNHCR to protect asylum seekers and refugees on the territory of Singapore.<sup>121</sup>

101. UNHCR encouraged the Government, pending the establishment of national asylum procedures, to consider implementing other temporary alternative measures to grant temporary refuge to asylum seekers and refugees, including providing them with the right to stay and work on a temporary basis until return to their country of origin in safety and dignity becomes possible or a third country solution is found for them.<sup>122</sup>

102. UNHCR also encouraged the Government to routinely provide UNHCR with access to those individuals who may be in need of international protection so that UNHCR may assess their international protection needs.<sup>123</sup>

103. UNHCR recommended that the Government ensure respect for the right to seek asylum by enabling effective and unhindered access to the territory of Singapore, including the opportunity to apply for refugee status with UNHCR, and full compliance with the principle of non-refoulement.<sup>124</sup>

104. UNHCR also recommended that the Government refrain from penalizing, including through corporal punishment, persons seeking international protection.<sup>125</sup>

105. UNHCR further recommended that the Government facilitate the safe disembarkation of individuals arriving irregularly by sea to Singapore, including stowaways, who wish to seek international protection.<sup>126</sup>

106. UNHCR recommended that the Government ensure that detention of persons in need of international protection is only used as a measure of last resort, where necessary and justified by law and for as short a period as possible. It also recommended that the Government ensure that detention does not constitute an obstacle to pursuing an asylum application and that alternatives to detention should be sought and given preference, particularly while an asylum application is pending adjudication.<sup>127</sup>

107. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reiterated its previous concerns that there were ongoing allegations that many women who were migrant domestic workers continued to be exploited and abused by their employers through actions that included non-payment of salary, deprivation of food and adequate rest, confiscation of personal items, such as mobile telephones and passports, restrictions on freedom of movement and refusal to pay medical expenses, as well as sexual, physical, verbal and psychological abuse.<sup>128</sup>

108. The Committee recommended that the State ensure that women migrant domestic workers were guaranteed the same level of protection and benefits as other workers, in particular with regard to public holidays, maximum weekly working hours and regular days of rest, including by extending the applicability of the Employment Act to migrant domestic workers.<sup>129</sup>

109. The Committee reiterated its previous concern that no measures had been taken to repeal the law requiring migrant workers to undergo mandatory and regular testing for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, which stipulated that they be deported on the grounds of pregnancy or diagnosis of HIV.<sup>130</sup>

## 6. Stateless persons<sup>131</sup>

110. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed its concern about the lack of official information on the number of stateless persons in the State.<sup>132</sup>

111. UNHCR recommended that the Government revise its legal provisions on citizenship to facilitate the realization of every child's right to a nationality and that it introduce a legal safeguard to ensure that any child born in the country who would otherwise be stateless acquires Singaporean citizenship.<sup>133</sup>

112. UNHCR also recommended that the Government modify the residency requirements for parents who are citizens by descent, so that they can always pass on their own citizenship to their child if the child would otherwise be stateless.<sup>134</sup>

113. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State revise the law to ensure that children born in Singapore who cannot acquire another nationality are able to automatically acquire Singaporean nationality.<sup>135</sup>

114. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the State take immediate and concrete steps to ensure that all Singaporean mothers can transfer their citizenship to their children, including to children born before 2004.<sup>136</sup>

115. The same Committee also recommended that the State consider amending article 122 of the Constitution to ensure that no child is, or becomes, stateless.<sup>137</sup>

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Tables containing information on the scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies for Singapore will be available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/SGindex.aspx>.
- <sup>2</sup> For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.1–166.14, 166.16–166.20, 166.22–166.32, 166.34–166.56, 166.63, 166.125–166.127 and 166.146.
- <sup>3</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 86.
- <sup>4</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 50.
- <sup>5</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 50.
- <sup>6</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 46.
- <sup>7</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 49.
- <sup>8</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 9.
- <sup>9</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 7.
- <sup>10</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 35 (d).
- <sup>11</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 37 (e).
- <sup>12</sup> UNHCR submission for the universal periodic review of Singapore, p. 2; CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 43 (d).
- <sup>13</sup> UNHCR submission, p. 3, and CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 43 (e).
- <sup>14</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 23 (c).
- <sup>15</sup> UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Singapore, para. 12.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 18.
- <sup>17</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 33.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 53.
- <sup>19</sup> OHCHR, "Funding", in *OHCHR Report 2016*, p. 79, *United Nations Human Rights Report 2017*, p. 79, *United Nations Human Rights Report 2018*, p. 77, and *United Nations Human Rights Report 2019*, p. 91.
- <sup>20</sup> For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.57–166.59, 166.62, 166.64, 166.66, 166.97, 166.99–166.106, 166.121–166.124 and 166.236.
- <sup>21</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 87. See also CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 15.
- <sup>22</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 13 (a)–(b).
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 40.
- <sup>24</sup> For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.60, 166.68–166.78, 166.109, 166.112, 166.115–166.118, 166.128, 166.152, 166.155, 166.216 and 166.220.
- <sup>25</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 20 (a).
- <sup>26</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 26.
- <sup>27</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 11.
- <sup>28</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 94.

- <sup>29</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 20 (b).
- <sup>30</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 41.
- <sup>31</sup> For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.107, 166.110 and 166.235.
- <sup>32</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 16 (a).
- <sup>33</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.21, 166.33, 166.80, 166.156–166.172 and 166.195.
- <sup>34</sup> See <https://bangkok.ohchr.org/news-release-un-human-rights-office-concerned-by-ongoing-use-of-death-penalty-in-singapore/>.
- <sup>35</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 34.
- <sup>36</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 20 (e).
- <sup>37</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, paras. 26 and 27 (a).
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 45 (b) and 46 (c).
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 45 (d) and 46 (f).
- <sup>40</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.173, 166.191, 166.193–166.194 and 166.196.
- <sup>41</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, paras. 45 (c) and 46 (e).
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 46.
- <sup>43</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 38.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 95.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* para. 98.
- <sup>46</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.86–166.92, 166.111, 166.113, 166.119–166.120, 166.154, 166.198–166.205 and 166.207.
- <sup>47</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 24.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup> See <https://bangkok.ohchr.org/news-release-un-human-rights-office-calls-on-the-government-of-singapore-to-drop-charges-against-performance-artist-and-activist/>.
- <sup>50</sup> UNESCO submission, para. 13.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 14.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 15.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 16.
- <sup>54</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.178 and 166.180–166.190.
- <sup>55</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 22.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 22 (a).
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 23 (d).
- <sup>58</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 44 (b).
- <sup>59</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 23 (b).
- <sup>60</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 44 (a).
- <sup>61</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 23 (c).
- <sup>62</sup> UNHCR submission, p. 5.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- <sup>64</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.65, 166.192 and 166.197.
- <sup>65</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 45.
- <sup>66</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 17. See also CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 45 (a).
- <sup>67</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 45 (b).
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 45 (c).
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 45 (d).
- <sup>70</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 25 (a) and (c).
- <sup>71</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.211 and 166.213.
- <sup>72</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 43.
- <sup>73</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 107.
- <sup>74</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.214, 166.217 and 166.221.
- <sup>75</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 103.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 105.
- <sup>77</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.212 and 166.215.
- <sup>78</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 100.
- <sup>79</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.218–166.219.
- <sup>80</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 27 (b).
- <sup>81</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 36.
- <sup>82</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 108.
- <sup>83</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.222–166.224 and 166.231.
- <sup>84</sup> UNESCO submission, para. 1.
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 12.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

- <sup>87</sup> Ibid., para. 12.
- <sup>88</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 20 (e).
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid., para. 35 (b).
- <sup>90</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 27 (a).
- <sup>91</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.67, 166.81–166.85, 166.141–166.151 and 166.208–166.210.
- <sup>92</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 93.
- <sup>93</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 21 (c).
- <sup>94</sup> A/HRC/36/48/Add.1, para. 96.
- <sup>95</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 21 (d)–(e).
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid., paras. 20 (b) and 21 (b).
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid., para. 17 (b).
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid., para. 19 (a).
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid., para. 24.
- <sup>100</sup> See [www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID:4019923:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:4019923:NO).
- <sup>101</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 29 (c).
- <sup>102</sup> See [www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID:4019923:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:4019923:NO).
- <sup>103</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 31.
- <sup>104</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.98, 166.108, 166.174–166.177 and 166.179.
- <sup>105</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 27 (d).
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid., para. 27 (c).
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid., para. 28.
- <sup>108</sup> Ibid., para. 29 (a).
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid., para. 29 (d).
- <sup>110</sup> Ibid., para. 32 (b)–(c).
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid., para. 12 (a).
- <sup>112</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.114, 166.129, 166.225–166.229, 166.230 and 166.232.
- <sup>113</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 35.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid., para. 35 (d).
- <sup>115</sup> Letter dated 29 May 2020 from the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues addressed to the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. Available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25314>.
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>117</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, para. 166.153.
- <sup>118</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 42.
- <sup>119</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.61, 166.79, 166.93–166.95, 166.130–166.140 and 166.233.
- <sup>120</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 42.
- <sup>121</sup> UNHCR submission, p. 2.
- <sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 2.
- <sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 2.
- <sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 3.
- <sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 3.
- <sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 3.
- <sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 6.
- <sup>128</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 34 (b).
- <sup>129</sup> Ibid., para. 35 (a).
- <sup>130</sup> Ibid., para. 34 (c).
- <sup>131</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/32/17, paras. 166.96 and 166.234.
- <sup>132</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 42.
- <sup>133</sup> UNHCR submission, p. 3.
- <sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 3.
- <sup>135</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5, para. 43 (c).
- <sup>136</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5, para. 23 (a).
- <sup>137</sup> Ibid., para. 23 (b).