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International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Combined second to fourth periodic reports submitted by Singapore under article 9 of the Convention, due in 2025

Foreword

This year marks the tenth year since Singapore signed the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) on 19 October 2015. It also marks our 60th year of independence.

We have made tremendous progress over the past 60 years as a nation. Singapore's early struggles are well-documented. We experienced racial riots a year before independence was thrust upon us in 1965. Lives were lost, many were injured, and there was widespread tension and fear. The consequences of racial strife were clear. We undertook efforts to ensure that Singapore would be a multi-racial nation, underpinned by the ideals of justice and equality for all. We commemorate Racial and Religious Harmony Month every year in July, the month of the 1964 racial riots, as a solemn reminder of the importance of maintaining racial understanding and tolerance among the different communities in Singapore.

Singapore strives continuously to protect and strengthen our hard-won social harmony, a precious asset which is fundamental to the well-being of our people. Because we are a highly diverse society with an open economy, we remain vigilant against forces that can easily sow division.

Multi-culturalism lies at the heart of the Singapore story and Singapore's national identity. We are a small and densely populated city-state, shaped by people of many races, languages and religions. We are a multi-racial and multi-religious society. Forging a common national identity while maintaining racial and religious harmony is therefore of paramount importance. Singapore's social fabric has been strong as a result of policies, institutions and programmes to expand our common space, ensuring that Singaporeans from different backgrounds can live together while appreciating each other's differences and fostering a shared sense of belonging and identity.

Recognising the importance of building our multi-cultural society, Singapore is fully committed to working towards a society free from racial discrimination, in line with our obligations under the ICERD and Sustainable Development Goal 10 on reducing inequality. Since the submission of our Initial Report in 2018, Singapore has strived to strengthen the building blocks that uphold our social harmony and build a fair, just and caring community where our people can thrive.

As we mark six decades of nation-building, we welcome the opportunity to submit the combined second to fourth periodic reports of Singapore under Article 9 of the ICERD. Singapore is fully committed to advancing the well-being of all racial communities in Singapore. We will continue to do so, even as we address the evolving needs of our society.

David Neo
Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth

Glossary of Terms

Census 2020	Singapore Census of Population in 2020
CPF	Central Provident Fund
CCE	Character and Citizenship Education
Council	Presidential Council for Minority Rights
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
Committee	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Concluding Observations	Concluding Observations on the initial report of Singapore (CERD/C/SGP/CO/1)
CEA	Council for Estate Agencies
MENDAKI	Council for the Development of Singapore Malay/Muslim Community
DOS	Department of Statistics
DDPA	Durban Declaration and Programme of Action
EFMA	Employment of Foreign Manpower Act
EIP	Ethnic Integration Policy
Follow-Up Report	Singapore's follow-up to the concluding observations on its initial report (CERD/C/SGP/FCO/1)
FTGP	Form Teacher Guidance Period
GHS	General Household Survey
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIA	Hope Initiative Alliance
HDB	Housing and Development Board
IMD	International Migrants Day
IMC-ICERD	Inter-Ministry Committee on the ICERD
Initial Report	Singapore's initial report under Article 9 of the ICERD (CERD/C/SGP/1)
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
IPS	Institute of Policy Studies

MMOs	Malay/Muslim Organisations
MMORN	MMO Rehabilitation Network
MDW	Migrant Domestic Worker
MCCY	Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOM	Ministry of Manpower
MRacialHA	Maintenance of Racial Harmony Act
MReligiousHA	Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act
MTL	Mother Tongue Languages
MUIS	Islamic Religious Council of Singapore
NYC	National Youth Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Online Criminal Harms Act
OPSG	OnePeople.sg
PBSG	Pro Bono SG
PCP	Primary Care Plan
POFMA	Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act
SAF	Singapore Armed Forces
SGD	Singapore Dollars [1 SGD is equivalent to 0.6629 Euro; 0.7648 USD. Rate accurate as at 21 November 2025 from the Monetary Authority of Singapore.]
SGPO	Singapore Government Partnerships Office
SINDA	Singapore Indian Development Association
TI-CPI	Transparency International Corruption Perception Index
TAFEP	Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices
TGFEP	Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices
Tripartite Committee	Tripartite Committee on Workplace Fairness
UN	United Nations
WFA	Workplace Fairness Act

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This Report covers the key developments and initiatives introduced by the Singapore Government since the submission of its Initial Report in 2018. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered the Initial Report of Singapore at its 2843rd (CERD/C/SR.2843) and 2844th meetings (CERD/C/SR.2844), held on 18 and 19 November 2021 respectively. At its 2856th meeting, held on 29 November 2021, it adopted Concluding Observations (CERD/C/SGP/CO/1). In paragraph 38 of its Concluding Observations, the Committee asked Singapore to provide information within one year on its implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 18(a) (right to health) and 30 (access to justice). Singapore submitted a follow-up report on 28 November 2022 (CERD/C/SGP/FCO/1).

1.2 This Report responds to the Committee's request for the second to fourth periodic reports of Singapore under Article 9 of the ICERD. This Report also sets out the progress made in relation to the recommendations, as well as other progress in accordance with Singapore's obligations under the ICERD.

1.3 This Report presents an opportunity to share Singapore's ongoing efforts to advance the well-being of all ethnic communities and to build a harmonious multi-racial and multi-religious society, in accordance with the principles of the ICERD. From our independence, Singapore has consciously and consistently built a society where all Singaporeans, regardless of race, language or religion, are empowered to achieve their potential and fulfil their aspirations. Our common national identity is underpinned by our unique form of multi-culturalism and is built on top of our distinct individual cultural identities, not in place of them.

1.4 Through these efforts, Singapore has made our diversity our strength. A survey by the Pew Research Center in 2021 found that 92% of respondents in Singapore think that having people of different backgrounds, including racial backgrounds, makes Singapore a better place to live in.[1] A survey in 2024 by the Institute of Policy Studies and OnePeople.sg showed that more than 90% of the public surveyed perceived moderate, high, or very high levels of racial and religious harmony in Singapore.[2] In the 2024 Gallup World Poll, 93% of respondents in Singapore said that the country was a "good place to live in" for racial minorities, placing Singapore first amongst the 134 countries and territories polled.

1.5 Since the Initial Report in 2018, the Government has made progress in several key areas. We have enacted further legislative safeguards against racial discrimination. For example, the Workplace Fairness Act, which was passed in Parliament in January 2025, is aimed at addressing employment-based discrimination on the basis of race, religion or language. The Workplace Fairness Act further introduces provisions for workers to seek remedies via private civil claims if they have faced workplace discrimination. The Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act was amended in 2019 to better combat the growing use of the Internet and social media to spread hate and address the threat of foreign influence through religious bodies. It also establishes the Community Remedial Initiative, a voluntary and non-penal measure through which an individual who has hurt the feelings of another religious community may take remedial actions to mend ties with the said affected community. The enactment of the Maintenance of Racial Harmony Act in 2025 consolidates all existing race-related offences. It clarifies the scope of conduct of such offences by introducing more objective descriptions and introduces greater safeguards and balances. It also introduces softer measures to encourage reconciliation and better understanding between races.

1.6 Beyond the legal framework, Singapore actively supports policies and programmes which encourage social mixing and promote inter-cultural appreciation. For instance, in 2021, the Government announced that female Muslim public healthcare staff may wear the headscarf (a religious symbol) with their uniform. This was pursuant to extensive consultation by the Government with community and religious leaders, as well as medical experts, taking into account evolving societal attitudes. In addition, the Government supports efforts to uplift our

[1] Pew Research Center, "Diversity and Division in Advanced Economies", 2021 https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2021/10/13/diversity-and-division-in-advanced-economies/.

[2] "Results from the IPS-OnePeople.sg Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony 2024", IPS Working Papers No. 59, 2025, at page 20.

minority communities. As an example of a greater collaboration between the Government and our ethnic communities, the Government has systematically strengthened inter-agency collaboration with key religious and community institutions within the Malay/Muslim community, to improve service delivery and expand efforts to uplift our minority communities. These efforts include reducing the recidivism rate; supporting vulnerable individuals, marriages and families; empowering youths; creating a more resilient workforce; and supporting community health initiatives. These efforts translate into tangible outcomes, such as in the form of higher educational attainment, home ownership and employment in the Malay/Muslim community.

1.7 Singapore is taking active steps to partner the next generation of Singaporeans, to ensure that Singapore's youth will carry on and build upon our ethos of multi-culturalism. Through platforms like the International Conference on Cohesive Societies, Singapore is also actively contributing to global thought leadership on multi-culturalism and social harmony.

1.8 In accordance with paragraph 35 of the Concluding Observations, the Government engaged and consulted various segments of our population in preparing this Report. These include religious and community leaders, youths, as well as community and civil society organisations, all of whom have an important stake in pursuing the goal of eliminating racial discrimination in Singapore. The stakeholders consulted were generally supportive of the Government's efforts to eliminate racial discrimination in Singapore. They gave concrete suggestions for improvement such as increasing public awareness on legislative safeguards to eliminate racial discrimination, and having more partnerships between the Government and stakeholders. The Government is heartened by such feedback, and we will take such feedback into account in our continual efforts to enhance national policies on race-related issues.

1.9 In accordance with paragraph 36 of the Concluding Observations, this Report will be made available to the public on the official website of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.[3] The Concluding Observations of the Committee will similarly be made available to the public when received.

[3] This report will be made available at https://www.mccy.gov.sg/sectors/community/international-convention-on-the-elimination-of-all-forms-of-racial-discrimination/.

Part I: General Information

2. Introduction

2.1 This Report covers the key developments and initiatives introduced by the Singapore Government since the submission of its Initial Report in 2018. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (the Committee) considered the Initial Report of Singapore at its 2843rd (CERD/C/SR.2843) and 2844th meetings (CERD/C/SR. 2844), held on 18 and 19 November 2021 respectively. At its 2856th meeting, held on 29 November 2021, it adopted Concluding Observations (CERD/C/SGP/CO/1) (Concluding Observations). In paragraph 38 of its Concluding Observations, the Committee asked Singapore to provide information within one year on its implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 18(a) (right to health) and 30 (access to justice). Singapore submitted a follow-up report on 28 November 2022 (CERD/C/SGP/FCO/1) (Follow-Up Report).

2.2 This Report responds to the Committee's request for the second to fourth periodic reports of Singapore under Article 9 of the ICERD. This Report also sets out the progress made in relation to the recommendations, as well as other progress in accordance with Singapore's obligations under the ICERD.

3. General Information on Singapore[4]

3.1 This section provides general information on Singapore, our people and the context in which they live, which is an important consideration when formulating, implementing and reviewing the Government's laws, policies and programmes. The Government reviews and factors in relevant data to ensure that our measures remain relevant to the changing nature of our society and the global environment in which we exist.

3.2 Singapore is a small, densely populated, multi-racial, island city-state, with one of the world's most diverse population. A Pew Research Center study in 2023 found Singapore's religious diversity to be "remarkable on a global scale".[5] Nationhood for us has always been the challenge of forging different communities into one people. We work continuously to maintain harmony and equality in this diverse population. Our unwavering commitment to fostering unity in diversity has made Singapore a place that all Singaporeans, regardless of race, language or religion, can live and thrive. This commitment is borne out in another global survey by the Pew Research Center in 2021, where 92% of respondents in Singapore think that having people of different backgrounds, including racial backgrounds, makes Singapore a better place to live in.[6]

Demographic characteristics

Population size, age, gender

3.3 All statistics in this section (paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6 below) are correct as of June 2025.

3.4 Singapore has a total population of 6.11 million. Of this, 3.66 million are citizens, 0.54 million are permanent residents, and 1.91 million are non-residents.[7]

[4] The domestic data cited within this report is largely from the Singapore Department of Statistics, which develops and maintains a national statistical system, providing statistics to support Singapore's social and economic development. One of the main population data collected by the Department of Statistics is census data, with the first post-independence census collected in 1970 and every 10 years thereafter. The most recent collection was in 2020.
[5] Pew Research Center, "In Singapore, religious diversity and tolerance go hand in hand", 2023, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/10/06/in-singapore-religious-diversity-and-tolerance-go-hand-in-hand/.
[6] Pew Research Center, "Diversity and Division in Advanced Economies", 2021 https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2021/10/13/diversity-and-division-in-advanced-economies/.
[7] Department of Statistics, Population in Brief 2025.

3.5 The total population growth from June 2024 to June 2025 was 1.2%.

3.6 The median age of the citizen population rose to 43.7 years in 2025, continuing the upward trend observed over the years. Residents aged 65 years and over form 20.7% of the resident population in 2025, a rise from 19.9% in 2024.[8]

Race and religious affiliation

3.7 Singapore is home to people who come from many different backgrounds and yet live together in harmony. We have made Singapore home through an overarching national identity, while embracing different cultures that add richness to our lives.

3.8 Based on the Singapore Census of Population in 2020 (Census 2020), of the resident[9] population, 74.3% were Chinese, 13.5% were Malay, 9.0% were Indian and 3.2% were from other ethnic groups. 31.1% were Buddhist, 18.9% Christian, 15.6% Muslim, 8.8% Taoist, 5.0% Hindu, and 0.6% from other religions. 20% professed no religion.

3.9 Based on Census 2020, with respect to the religious profile of racial groups, 98.8% of Malays were Muslim, 57.3% of Indians were Hindus, and among the Chinese, 40.4% were Buddhists and 21.6% were Christians.[10] As the Malay community is predominantly Muslim, for the purposes of this Report, we have generally referred to them as the "Malay/Muslim community". To maintain harmony in this highly dense and diverse population, all races and religions are treated equally.

3.10 Singapore has four official languages: Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English.[11] This helps to preserve the languages of the main ethnic groups, while the common language, English, facilitates inter-ethnic interaction and communication. Malay is the national language while English is the language of administration.

Standard of living and national income

3.11 The United Nations' (UN) Human Development Report in 2025 ranked Singapore 13th out of 193 countries and territories on the Human Development Index.[12]

3.12 In 2024, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current market prices was 731,436 million Singapore Dollars (SGD) while per capita GDP at current market prices was SGD 121,161. Singapore's economy saw a real growth rate of 4.4% in 2024.[13]

3.13 The median gross monthly income from employment (including employer-contributed monies to the Central Provident Fund (CPF) – a mandatory social security savings scheme)[14] of full-time employed residents in Singapore was SGD 5,500 in 2024, compared to SGD 5,197 in 2023.[15] In real terms,[16] median income grew by 0.7% per annum from 2019 to 2024.

3.14 Singapore's socioeconomic performance can be attributed to continued political stability, quality judicial performance and high integrity of government. The Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2024 ranked Singapore as the third least corrupt country in the world with a score of 84.[17] Besides our good showing under the TI-CPI, the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy also ranked Singapore as the least corrupt

[8] Department of Statistics, Population in Brief 2025.
[9] Resident population refers to Singapore citizens and permanent residents.
[10] Census 2020.
[11] See Article 153A of the Constitution.
[12] The Human Development Index ranks each country according to a score on a composite index integrating per capita Gross National Product, life expectancy, literacy and educational levels. United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Insights", https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights.
[13] Department of Statistics, https://www.singstat.gov.sg/modules/infographics/economy#:~:text=Government%20officials%20will%20never%20ask,%25.
[14] The CPF is a compulsory comprehensive savings and pension plan for working Singaporeans and permanent residents primarily to fund their retirement, healthcare and housing needs in Singapore. It is funded by contributions from employers and employees.
[15] Ministry of Manpower, "Labour Force in Singapore 2024".
[16] Deflated by Consumer Price Index for all items at 2019 prices (2019=100).
[17] Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index", https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/singapore.

country in its 2024 Report on Perceptions of Corruption in Asia, a position that Singapore has held since 1995.[18]

[18] Political & Economic Risk Consultancy, "Corruption in Asia – 2024", http://www.asiarisk.com/subscribe/dataindx.html.

Part II: Information Relating to Articles 1 to 7

4. Introduction

4.1 We seek to build a nation where every citizen, irrespective of race, religion, or income level, benefits from the nation's progress. We continue our efforts to create an enabling environment in which all Singaporeans have equal opportunities to thrive and contribute to their fullest potential while strengthening measures to safeguard individual rights.

4.2 Social cohesion is fundamental to Singapore's existence, given our highly diverse and inter-connected society. The Government is committed to strengthening trust and mutual understanding among people of different backgrounds. We fulfil this role comprehensively through various Government policies and programmes, which aim to deepen social cohesion in our multi-religious and multi-racial society.

4.3 Singapore implements our obligations under the ICERD in line with our longstanding commitment to fostering racial harmony and combating racial discrimination. The Inter-Ministry Committee on the ICERD (IMC-ICERD) continues to be the national mechanism for coordinating policies and monitoring the implementation of the ICERD.

4.4 The Government engages the public on issues pertaining to race and religion, as strengthening social cohesion is a shared responsibility. The IMC-ICERD actively seeks the views of the non-governmental sector, community and civil society organisations (CSOs), and other stakeholders and partners on laws, policies and issues pertinent to racial discrimination and the ICERD.

5. Article 1 – Definition of Racial Discrimination

Prohibition of racial discrimination in domestic law

5.1 In Singapore, equality among our races is a cornerstone of our national identity. The principle of equality is enshrined in the Constitution of Singapore, which is the supreme law in Singapore. Article 12(1) of the Constitution states that "[a]ll persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law".

5.2 In response to paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Concluding Observations, Article 12(2) of the Constitution specifically prohibits discrimination against citizens of Singapore "on the ground only of religion, race, descent or place of birth".[19] The Singapore Court of Appeal, the highest court of the land, pronounced in 2022 that "religion, race, descent and place of birth" are "the exclusive grounds" on which discrimination against Singaporean citizens is "*absolutely barred*", as provided for in Article 12(2) of the Constitution.[20] The Court recognised that these grounds, as specified in Article 12(2) of the Constitution, indicate the types of diversities that have been "deemed worthy of greater constitutional protection, thereby reflecting the ethno-religious, pluralistic community that the Constitution is designed to sustain."

5.3 The prohibition of racial discrimination in Singapore includes both direct and indirect discrimination, and we are committed to eliminating racial discrimination in public and private spheres. Further details can be found in paragraphs 6.3 to 6.8 of our Initial Report.

5.4 Our legislative measures to combat racial discrimination can be found at paragraphs 6.4 to 6.24 of this Report, and remedies and redress mechanisms can be found at paragraphs 10.3 to 10.14 of this Report.

[19] This Article prohibits discrimination on the basis of "religion, race, descent and place of birth" in relation to: (i) any law, (ii) in the appointment to any office or employment under any public authority, (iii) in the administration of any law relating to the acquisition, holding or disposition of property, and (iv) in the establishing or carrying on of any trade, business, profession, vocation or employment.

[20] *Tan Seng Kee v Attorney-General* [2022] 1 SLR 1347, at paragraph 304.

6. Article 2 – Elimination of Racial Discrimination

General measures to combat racial discrimination

6.1 Singapore takes our international obligations seriously and gives full effect to our obligations under the ICERD. To effectively combat racial discrimination and protect human rights, the Government uses a combination of levers, which include legislative safeguards for racial and religious harmony, and policies and programmes that protect the interests of racial minorities and encourage social mixing. These are addressed in the following sections of this Report.

6.2 The Government periodically reviews these laws, policies and programmes to ensure effectiveness in combating racial discrimination. Since the submission of the Initial Report, several new laws and policies have been put in place or are in progress to strengthen our measures against racial discrimination.

6.3 We elaborate on our multi-stakeholder approach in further detail in this section as follows: (i) legislative safeguards against racial discrimination; (ii) institutions to combat racial discrimination; (iii) ensuring the integration of minorities in all spheres; and (iv) support for institutions and movements.

Legislative safeguards against racial discrimination

6.4 According to the 2024 Gallup World Poll, 93% of respondents in Singapore said that the country was a "good place to live in" for racial minorities, placing Singapore first amongst the 134 countries and territories polled. This was not by coincidence but is instead, a result of continuous and deliberate effort.

6.5 Our laws have been pivotal in combating racial discrimination and protecting the rights of all people in Singapore. Laws also serve to "signal what our society considers right or wrong, and nudge people over time to behave better".[21] With this understanding, we maintain a strong emphasis on legislative safeguards to combat racial discrimination.

6.6 In response to paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Concluding Observations on anti-discrimination legislation, Singapore incorporates the principles and provisions of the ICERD within our legislation and policies, such as in the Constitution and in other specific legislation and policies.

6.7 The Singapore Government recognises that laws are not a panacea for all racial issues, and that one cannot, by law, force people of different races to get along with one another. The law on its own cannot prevent insensitivity or racist slights from happening in everyday interactions. However, the law establishes clear boundaries for unacceptable conduct.

6.8 Since 2018, Singapore has strengthened our legal framework for combatting racial discrimination and preserving social harmony, particularly in addressing the incitement to racial or religious hatred and workplace-related racial discrimination.

<u>Enhancements to existing laws</u>

The Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act

6.9 The Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act (MReligiousHA), which was passed in 1990 and came into effect in 1992, aims to maintain religious harmony in Singapore by giving the Government power to issue restraining orders and take other stern measures against any leader, official or individual member of any religious group or institution who stirs up hatred between our religious communities (details in our Initial Report at paragraphs 7.31 to 7.32).

6.10 While the MReligiousHA provided a good legal framework, setting out clear boundaries on behaviours that are not allowed in Singapore, the Singapore Government recognised that

[21] National Day Rally, 29 August 2021, then-Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, https://www.pmo.gov.sg/Newsroom/National-Day-Rally-2021-English.

there was room for improvement as society and attitudes towards religion and race evolved. The Singapore Government therefore amended the MReligiousHA in 2019 to better combat the growing use of the Internet and social media to spread hate and address the threat of foreign influence through religious bodies. The 2019 MReligiousHA amendments consolidated existing Penal Code offences relating to religious harmony and housed them under the MReligiousHA, such as the offence of knowingly urging violence against persons and groups on the grounds of religion or religious beliefs. This protection is provided to religious groups and its members, as well as non-religious groups.

6.11 The 2019 MReligiousHA amendments further introduced the Community Remedial Initiative (CRI), a voluntary measure through which an individual who has allegedly wounded the feelings of another religious community, may take remedial actions to mend ties with the aggrieved community. Examples of such remedial actions may include a public or private apology to the aggrieved parties, or participation in inter-religious events.

New laws

The Maintenance of Racial Harmony Act

6.12 The Singapore Government regularly seeks feedback on racial harmony in Singapore and engages think-tanks to conduct periodic studies. A Singapore think-tank, the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), collaborated with OnePeople.sg (OPSG), an advocacy body for racial harmony, to conduct studies on racial and religious relations over the years. In the most recent study in 2024, across the various racial and religious groups, more than 90% of the public surveyed perceived moderate, high, or very high levels of racial and religious harmony in Singapore.[22] While these findings have been consistent over the years, the Singapore Government is cognisant that we cannot take this state of affairs for granted, especially in an age when identity politics is on the rise globally.

6.13 In February 2025, the Singapore Government introduced and passed the Maintenance of Racial Harmony Act (MRacialHA) in Parliament. The new MRacialHA consolidates existing race-related offences, such as inciting violence on the basis of racial belief and threats to racial harmony and performing acts that promote enmity against a racial group. The MRacialHA also clarifies the ambit of existing offences by introducing more objective descriptions. For example, the offence of wounding the racial feelings of any person was clarified as insulting, threatening or abusing any person on the basis of race. This narrows the scope of conduct and provides greater clarity.

6.14 Similar to the MReligiousHA, the MRacialHA provides a defence of private or domestic conduct, to allow people to have a safe space to express their views about race and religion in private or domestic settings. It also provides a defence of pointing out in good faith any race-related matter for the purpose of bringing about a removal of that matter. This ensures sufficient safeguards and balances. Additionally, the MRacialHA also introduces the CRI, allowing for reconciliation and rehabilitation. The measures contained in the MRacialHA will be operationalised in due course.

Workplace Fairness Act

6.15 Workplaces in Singapore must adopt fair and merit-based practices so that all employees have the opportunity to develop their potential and thrive in all workplaces. Official surveys show that most employers in Singapore have fair employment practices, and there is an overall declining trend of workplace discrimination faced by employees and jobseekers. Nevertheless, Singapore has continued to make progress in strengthening our framework to further reinforce fair workplace practices and norms.

6.16 In July 2021, the Tripartite Committee on Workplace Fairness (Tripartite Committee) was set up to study policy options to strengthen workplace fairness standards. The Tripartite Committee comprised representatives from the Government, National Trades Union

[22] "Results from the IPS-OnePeople.sg Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony 2024", IPS Working Papers No. 59, 2025, at page 20.

Congress, and Singapore National Employers Federation, which ensured that proposals took into account both workers' and employers' views and considerations. A wide range of stakeholders were consulted by the Tripartite Committee to better understand their needs and views. They included employees, employers, trade associations and chambers, union leaders, human resource and legal professionals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community partners and members of the public. Since 2021, the Tripartite Committee held over 90 in-person engagements, with more than 5,000 individuals from all sectors.

6.17 To give effect to the Tripartite Committee's recommendations to strengthen protections against workplace discrimination and to promote fair and harmonious workplace norms, the Singapore Government passed the Workplace Fairness Act (WFA) in Parliament over two Bills. A first Bill, covering the scope of protections against discrimination and employers' obligations, was passed in Parliament on 8 January 2025. A key category of protection codified in the first Bill is that employers are prohibited from making adverse employment decisions on the basis of race, religion and language ability, amongst other protected characteristics. Such breaches may result in the Government taking action against employers.

6.18 A second Bill, the Workplace Fairness (Dispute Resolution) Bill, was passed in Parliament on 4 November 2025. The second Bill established a framework that provides workers who experience workplace discrimination with an avenue to make claims against employers. The dispute resolution process was designed in close cooperation with Tripartite Partners – the National Trades Union Congress and the Singapore National Employers Federation. The second Bill benefited from feedback gathered by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) following an open call on the Singapore Government's e-engagement platform from 26 August to 19 September 2025 on: (i) the approach for amicable and expeditious resolution for workplace fairness disputes; (ii) the judicial forum to hear workplace fairness claims; and (iii) representation of parties by unions for workplace fairness claims.

6.19 With this landmark legislation, individuals will be better supported to seize opportunities and thrive in a multi-racial and multi-religious workforce. The WFA is intended to complement the existing Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices (TGFEP) which continue to provide comprehensive protection against other forms of discrimination. Further details on how the WFA complements and enhances other employment-based remedies can be found at paragraphs 10.3 to 10.8 of this Report.

The Online Criminal Harms Act

6.20 Technological advances have brought many benefits to society, but have also exacerbated inequality, social divisions, misinformation, as well as a digital divide. There are growing concerns about the exploitation of online services and platforms for criminal activities. The Online Criminal Harms Act (OCHA) was introduced in 2023 to enable the Singapore Government to deal more effectively with online activities that are criminal in nature, such as threats to racial and religious harmony, in respect of social media posts or messages which perpetuate or incite violence against people of a certain race or religion. The OCHA allows the Singapore Government to regulate and restrict the exposure of Singapore users to such criminal activities and better protect the public in Singapore from various harms in the online space.

Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act

6.21 Around the world, falsehoods have been used to divide societies along racial and religious fault lines. Singapore is not immune, and as a multi-racial and multi-religious society, it is even more paramount that we navigate our diversity carefully and not allow falsehoods to give rise to instability and conflict. Left unchecked, repeated falsehoods can become accepted as truths, causing divisions in our society.

6.22 The Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA) was passed in May 2019, and came into force on 2 October 2019. POFMA is used to counter falsehoods, including those that exploit prejudices, arouse anger and fear, and undermine constructive debate. For POFMA to be invoked, two conditions must be satisfied: (i) there must be a false

statement of fact, and not opinions or criticisms; and (ii) the public interest is affected, for example where there is a need to prevent incitement of feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different groups of persons.

6.23 POFMA relies primarily on correction directions, which simply require that the facts be placed alongside the falsehoods, drawing the readers' attention to the facts. Such directions do not require removal of the statement and are not sanctions. Rather, they allow the public to read the original post and the Government's clarification and come to their own conclusions. In this way, the democratic process is aided. Socio-political discourse grounded on facts rather than false premises takes place openly and constructively on a variety of issues, including those of race and religion.

6.24 POFMA also provides for checks and balances. All Ministerial directions under POFMA can be challenged in Court. This is part of the fundamental design of POFMA, which created a calibrated set of powers with greater judicial oversight over executive action.

Institutions to combat racial discrimination

6.25 Singapore's overall approach to the promotion and protection of human rights is one which is well-suited to our local context and responsive to the needs of our communities. Our approach focuses on delivering positive outcomes that can be sustained over time.

6.26 In response to paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Concluding Observations, on the establishment of a national human rights institution, Singapore uses a decentralised and mutually reinforcing system of legislation, regulation and institutional oversight. This approach has worked for Singapore, and we have achieved good outcomes.

6.27 The Constitution established a Presidential Council for Minority Rights (Council), which serves as a safeguard against the Government enacting discriminatory laws. The Council examines new bills passed by Parliament and reports any provisions that may be prejudicial to any racial or religious community back to Parliament so that the bill would be reconsidered. The Council comprises up to 20 members, including religious and community leaders from different racial and religious groups. The Council has the general function to consider and report on such matters affecting persons of any racial or religious community in Singapore as may be referred to it by Parliament or the Government. The Singapore Courts are also vested with the power to invalidate any law that violates the principle of equality enshrined in Article 12 of the Constitution.

6.28 More recently, the MRacialHA will establish a new Presidential Council for Racial and Religious Harmony, to advise on matters relating to racial and religious harmony that are referred to it by the Minister for Home Affairs or by Parliament.

6.29 Singapore's approach also provides a formal avenue for racial and religious communities to engage directly with the Government on policies that affect them through the National Steering Committee on Racial and Religious Harmony. Established in 2006, the National Steering Committee on Racial and Religious Harmony is a national platform for leaders from race, religion and community-based organisations to engage with the Government on policies, exchange honest views, build a network of trust, and formulate strategies to strengthen social harmony.

6.30 The Government also makes a conscious effort to consult relevant stakeholders as part of the development of our laws and policies, including the various measures highlighted in this Report. We have explained our consultative process on the WFA, the MRacialHA and the MReligiousHA at paragraphs 6.16 to 6.18 and 8.9 to 8.10 of this Report. Further details on our consultative process can also be found at paragraph 9.32 on the wearing of headscarves for Malay/Muslim women at workplaces.

6.31 An Inter-Ministry Committee on Human Rights, comprising 15 Government agencies, coordinates the implementation of cross-cutting human rights policies, and engages civil society to better understand their concerns. The Government regularly consults various CSOs on a range of human rights issues raised by them, including those related to racial and religious discrimination. Most recently, CSOs were consulted from June to August 2025 on

issues related to employment, migrant workers, capital punishment and freedom of expression.

6.32 Specific to the issue of eliminating all forms of racial discrimination, the Inter-Ministry Committee on the ICERD, comprising representatives from eight Government agencies, is the national mechanism for coordinating policies and monitoring the implementation of the ICERD.

6.33 The overall effectiveness of our institutional mechanisms has been validated by indicators such as World Bank's Government Effectiveness ranking, which ranked the Singapore Government's effectiveness in the 100th percentile in 2023, a ranking that Singapore held consistently for a decade.[23]

6.34 Singapore will continue to review the existing mechanisms to ensure that our obligations under the ICERD are implemented in the most effective way, taking into account Singapore's own unique circumstances.

6.35 In line with our decentralised approach, Singapore provides a range of mechanisms to ensure that there is effective protection and remedies for victims of racial discrimination in Singapore. These are described in more detail under paragraphs 10.3 to 10.14 of this Report.

Ensuring the integration of minorities in all spheres

6.36 Singapore's unwavering commitment to multi-culturalism is evinced by the fact that minorities are well-represented across all spheres, including in public and political life. In response to paragraphs 19 and 20 of the Concluding Observations, the Constitution provides that "all persons of whatever race in the same grade of the service of the Government shall, subject to the terms and conditions of their employment, be treated impartially".[24] Accordingly, all Government agencies practise meritocracy in their hiring practices and employee progression, including in the Singapore Armed Forces and law enforcement. The different racial groups are represented in the Singapore Armed Forces, and ethnic minorities serve across the Army, Air Force, Navy and the Digital and Intelligence Service. Due to operational security considerations, we do not release detailed statistics on recruitment and deployment matters. Further information on impartiality in employment within the public service may be found at paragraphs 7.7 to 7.9 of the Initial Report.

6.37 Beyond laws prohibiting racial discrimination, the Government makes efforts to recruit a diverse range of candidates to serve in Government agencies. This includes working with the ethnic-based Self-Help Groups such as the Council for the Development of Singapore Malay/Muslim Community (MENDAKI) and the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA) on outreach programmes to share about Public Service career opportunities. Through these efforts, we endeavour to bring in individuals from the minority groups to serve in various parts of the Public Service, including in leadership positions.[25]

6.38 Minorities are well represented in key and prominent political positions in Singapore. We elaborated on the Group Representation Constituencies in our electoral system to ensure that the Singapore Parliament will always be multi-racial in system at paragraphs 7.33 to 7.35 of our Initial Report. To improve racial representation in political office, Singapore amended our Constitution in 2016 to introduce a procedure for reserved elections for the office of the President. If no person from a given ethnic community (namely, the Chinese, Malay, Indian or other minority communities) has been President for any of the five most recent Presidential terms, the next Presidential election will be reserved for a candidate from that community. The 2017 election was the first reserved election, for candidates from the Malay/Muslim community, as no Malay/Muslim had assumed the office of President of Singapore in more than 46 years. President Halimah Yacob was elected as our first female President in 2017.

[23] World Bank, "Government Effectiveness: Percentile Rank – Singapore", https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GE.PER.RNK?locations=SG.
[24] See Article 154 of the Constitution.
[25] "Diversity in Gender, Ethnicities and Backgrounds at Top Levels of Civil Service", 5 April 2022, Written Reply to Parliamentary Question.

Singapore's current president, Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who was not elected in a reserved election, is from the Indian community.

Support for institutions and movements

6.39 Singapore takes a multi-stakeholder approach to the implementation of the ICERD. The Singapore Government continually seeks to involve citizens in nation-building, enabling everyone to play a part in our shared future. Since the submission of our Initial Report, Singapore has undertaken several key measures:

a. The Forward Singapore exercise was launched in June 2022 to engage citizens from all walks of life on how we should refresh our social compact and shared understanding on our roles and responsibilities towards each other. This exercise involved more than 200,000 citizens over 16 months.

b. The Singapore Government Partnerships Office (SGPO) was launched in January 2024 to strengthen the government's partnerships and engagements with citizens. The new office was a response to aspirations shared by citizens during the Forward Singapore exercise to shape their communities, as well as co-create policies, public spaces and services. The SGPO aims to make partnering with the Government more seamless and accessible in three ways: (i) as a first-stop for citizens who want to take action on an initiative in partnership with the Government; (ii) to catalyse new partnerships by directing interested citizens to potential funding and other resources which can help make their ideas a reality; and (iii) to advocate for deeper citizen-government collaboration.

c. Our youths, the future generation of Singapore, play an important role in maintaining social cohesion. It is therefore important to establish channels through which youths can share their perspectives. MCCY and the National Youth Council (NYC) are organising a year-long series of engagements in 2025 to co-develop the SG Youth Plan with diverse youth segments. Covering topics including social cohesion, the SG Youth Plan will chart how the Government and society can better empower youths to play an even bigger role in building Singapore's shared future.

6.40 The Government provides funding for projects that promote racial integration and address racial discrimination. The Harmony Fund, launched in 2013, supports ground-up initiatives that foster racial and religious harmony. Since the submission of the Initial Report, new initiatives which have been supported include:

a. A Tapestry of Sacred Music by The Esplanade Co Ltd, for the public to experience a diverse selection of music and cultural practices from various communities;

b. Over To You Video Series by The Meatmen Channel Pte Ltd, a video series exploring food and culture through the process of cooking culturally iconic meals; and

c. Walk A Mile in My Shoes by Imaginable Ltd, an interactive drama skit that exposes students to different cultures and instils in them a sense of appreciation for diversity, the need for inter-racial and inter-religious understanding, empathy and sensitivity when interacting with members from another community.

6.41 Our local CSOs strive to build bridges between different races and nationalities. For example, OPSG actively aims to foster an appreciation for diversity and facilitate a deeper awareness of race relations. The organisation has a suite of community engagement programmes that build capacity among stakeholders, including educators and community leaders, to better understand trends and developments concerning community integration, conflict resolution, ground sensing and new media engagement. OPSG has received recurrent Government funding for its key activities, for example, ongoing dialogues to promote mutual respect and understanding on racial issues, and flagship events such as the youth-driven HarmonyWorks! Conference which has been held annually for twenty years.

6.42 MOM works closely with stakeholders such as CSOs, employers, dormitory operators, community partners and migrant worker volunteers to build bridges between citizens and migrant workers from different races and nationalities. These initiatives include social media outreach, dormitory orientation programme for new workers and festive celebrations in dormitories and recreation centres which involve the local communities. Details of these initiatives to promote inter-cultural understanding and appreciation between citizens and migrant workers can be found at paragraphs 11.21 to 11.24 of this Report.

7. Article 3 – Preventing Racial Segregation

7.1 As stated in paragraph 6.7 above, law, on its own, is insufficient to combat racial discrimination. The Singapore Government actively implements policies and establishes platforms that maximise our common space and strengthen cohesion across cultural identities. These policies are paramount in shaping the ideal behaviours that contribute to a multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious society.

7.2 Singapore has a longstanding policy of encouraging social mixing. This has worked to prevent racial segregation and promote interaction and understanding among our people. In turn, these common experiences further help to forge a common national identity. We elaborate on three key institutions in further detail in this section, as follows: (i) public housing; (ii) national schools; and (iii) military conscription.

Social mixing in public housing

7.3 Singapore's public housing provides opportunities for social mixing across different cultures. As explained in paragraphs 8.2 to 8.6 of the Initial Report, Singapore implemented the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) in 1989 to engender social interactions and prevent racial segregation in housing. The EIP ensures a balanced mix of various ethnic groups in its public housing or Housing and Development Board (HDB) estates, where about 80% of the population lives.

7.4 The EIP has helped to maintain racial and social harmony in Singapore as different races live and interact with each other in their neighbourhood on a daily basis. The EIP has prevented the formation of ethnic enclaves as all ethnic groups are represented across the different planning areas.

7.5 Our public housing towns provide many community spaces and facilities, so residents can meet, interact and bond with others in the community. Communal facilities such as community clubs and playgrounds provide spaces for social mixing as the residents participate in interest groups or community programmes.

7.6 The effectiveness of Singapore's public housing policies, including the EIP, in promoting ethnic integration is demonstrated by HDB's Sample Household Surveys, which are conducted every five years.

7.7 Most residents were found to have interacted with neighbours of other ethnic groups or nationalities. According to the Sample Household Surveys, residents' social circles have seen increasing ethnic diversity. In 2023/2024, 52.9% of residents had neighbours in their social circle who were of a different ethnicity from themselves, higher than 24.1% in 2018. Among them, almost all (96.7%) expressed satisfaction with neighbourly relations.

Social mixing in national schools

7.8 Singapore's national schools provide a common platform for children of all races, religions and cultures to learn and grow together. Our national schools provide a conducive setting for children to build friendships across diverse groups.

7.9 Social mixing across races is encouraged through inter-school partnerships. For example, schools come together to celebrate a variety of cultural and religious events, such as Chinese New Year, Hari Raya Puasa,[26] and Deepavali.[27] Through these student-led collaborations, students of all races have multiple opportunities to learn and experience different cultures from and with each other. More details on national schools are at paragraphs 8.9 to 8.10 of the Initial Report.

Social mixing in National Service

7.10 Singapore's National Service, a mandatory two-year, full-time military conscription for all male Singapore citizens and permanent residents between the ages of 18 and 40, provides an opportunity for such individuals from different races to train, live and serve alongside one another in the uniformed services (as mentioned at paragraph 6.11 of our Initial Report). These common experiences have contributed to fostering greater cohesiveness and national identity among our people.

8. Article 4 – Preventing Incitement to Racial Discrimination

8.1 As set out in paragraphs 6.9 to 6.24 above, Singapore has developed a legal framework to prevent the incitement to racial hatred and discrimination, including by criminalising such acts in serious cases. These laws ensure that our people can enjoy their individual liberties in a safe and harmonious society.

Legislative instruments and freedom of expression

8.2 Singapore's laws and approach towards racial hatred and offensive speech is consistent with international law and the views of the Committee in General Recommendation 35. Our people have their fundamental rights and freedoms, including the freedom of expression, protected within our legal framework. Freedom of speech, expression and peaceful assembly is protected under Article 14(1)(a) and (b) of our Constitution. Such freedom may only be restricted by Parliament by law in specific circumstances. For instance, where Parliament considers such restrictions necessary or expedient in the interest of Singapore's security, public order or morality, amongst others.

8.3 The need for limits on speech that can harm the rights of others, damage communities and societies, erode trust in institutions and undermine democracy, is recognised under international human rights law. Singapore's laws on hate speech and online falsehoods impose limits on such speech in accordance with our Constitution, which aligns with such international obligations.

8.4 Singapore strikes a balance between individual liberty and the preservation of a safe and harmonious society. Singapore's laws against hate speech are consistent with Article 4 of the ICERD and cover all grounds for discrimination mentioned in Article 1 of the ICERD. Hate speech, words that promote enmity, hatred or ill will between different racial or religious groups, and words uttered with the deliberate intention of wounding the racial and religious feelings of any person are criminal offences. Organisations that promote or incite racial discrimination are also prohibited. Public authorities and public institutions do not promote or incite racial discrimination. Law enforcement agencies investigate each case and take action against offenders regardless of their race, descent or ethnicity.

8.5 Our range of legislation which seek to tackle hate crimes and hate speech, include the Penal Code, the MReligiousHA, the MRacialHA and the Undesirable Publications Act. In response

[26] Regional term for 'Festival of Eid'.

[27] Regional term for 'Diwali'.

to paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Concluding Observations, these laws do not prohibit any speech on race which does not cross into hate speech or racially derogatory speech and therefore do not curtail freedom of expression.

8.6 While we take a stern approach to tackling hate speech and racially and religiously derogatory speech, we do not prohibit the respectful and lawful expression of commentary or the sharing of opinions and experiences on issues related to race and religion.

8.7 Our laws aim to keep discourse on race and religion free from hate and offensive speech. This is especially important in an age when identity politics is on the rise globally. This approach gives everyone a safe space to speak about their experiences and their views, including on issues of racial discrimination.

8.8 Our prohibitions on hate speech are carefully calibrated, taking into account a variety of considerations, such as the impact of offensive words on the feelings of the targeted group, including the words themselves and the likely impact the speech will have, the platform of delivery, occasion on which the words were said, and the reach of the person making the statement. We further consider the security implications of the targeted group's response to the hate speech, such as increasing tensions among communities.

8.9 These laws were developed in consultation with Singaporeans. For example, leading up to the introduction of the MRacialHA, the Ministry of Home Affairs conducted numerous engagement sessions over half a year with members of the public, community leaders, and race-based entities. These included 17 engagement sessions covering close to 300 individuals, an online poll with more than 1000 respondents, as well as a public consultation exercise which received over 100 pieces of feedback. This feedback was crucial to understanding the public's attitudes towards racial issues in Singapore, which in turn provided crucial context to determine the appropriate boundaries of acceptable conduct that should be covered by legislation.

8.10 The amendments to the MReligiousHA in 2019 involved extensive engagements over several months with over 60 organisations, including grassroots associations and religious organisations across the various faiths in Singapore. Their views provided important contextual understanding of the unique practices of our religious communities, which in turn allowed the Government to scope the new levers in a sufficiently robust manner that did not impinge on the practice of religion.

8.11 Singapore is fully committed to protecting the fundamental right of citizens to speak on racial and religious issues, and Singapore also supports and facilitates programmes that promote constructive and safe discourse on sensitive issues, including racial discrimination. The freedom and opportunity for our people to discuss matters of race is seen in the many ground-up initiatives involving various groups, including those that have been mentioned in this Report.

<u>No tolerance for racist or religiously insensitive behaviour</u>

8.12 Singapore takes a strong stance against racial discrimination and ensures that any racist or religiously insensitive behaviour is addressed through legislative measures and adequate enforcement.

8.13 As we have reiterated throughout this Report, the legislative framework in place is not a panacea for solving all race-related challenges. The goal which the Singapore Government is trying to achieve is a difficult one – fostering an environment of trust, empathy and unity, building a future where everyone continues to feel a deep sense of belonging and pride, regardless of race or religion; it is a goal that takes hard work.

8.14 Unfortunately, it is not possible to completely eradicate insensitivity or racist slights from happening. However, when these situations do arise, Singapore adopts a zero-tolerance approach towards such behaviour. Victims of racial discrimination can report such instances to the police. Our authorities will not hesitate to take stern action against the perpetrators, including the imposition of criminal penalties by our courts in serious cases where proven beyond reasonable doubt.

8.15 For instance, in May 2023, a Chinese man deliberately placed two cans of pork at the entrance of a mosque. He did this with full knowledge that the consumption of pork was forbidden in Islam, and he knew that his actions would anger the Malay/Muslim community. The accused person pleaded guilty to committing an act which he knew was prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different racial groups. In sentencing the accused person, the Court considered the offence to be highly aggravated, since it involved deliberate offensive conduct to a place of worship, and sentenced him to 12 weeks' imprisonment.[28]

Laws protecting public discourse from online falsehoods and misinformation

8.16 In addition to criminal laws against racial hate speech, Singapore also has other laws to address less serious cases of speech which may strain our multi-racial and multi-religious fabric. As outlined in paragraphs 6.21 to 6.24 above, POFMA addresses online falsehoods and misinformation by targeting false statements of fact that harm the public interest.

8.17 POFMA has never been applied to curb respectful and constructive discourse on racial discrimination. Instead, its primary purpose is to prevent the spread of misinformation. If such information pertains to racial and religious communities in Singapore, POFMA action will be taken if it is in the public interest to do so. In one case, it was used to dispel falsehoods about the treatment of the migrant worker community during COVID-19. A POFMA correction order was issued in 2020 when an individual stated that a Government advisory was issued without the advice of health professionals; and that MOM discouraged the testing of migrant workers for COVID-19. The POFMA correction was necessary to emphasise that Singapore's responses to the pandemic were based on scientific evidence and the advice of public health professionals. Contrary to the falsehood, the Government advisory in question was issued to employers of migrant workers to ask them not to send their employees to hospitals if their employees were well. This was the same advice issued by the Government to all residents of Singapore.

8.18 POFMA does not curtail the freedom of expression. Issues of racial discrimination are freely discussed at various platforms, including community-initiated dialogues, without interference or intimidation. Participants in such conversations are encouraged to air their views, and the Government recognises that these are useful ways for us to better understand the needs of citizens and the challenges faced by minority communities, which in turn informs our laws, policies and programmes. Examples of such consultative platforms can be found at paragraphs 6.29 to 6.31 of this Report, and examples of dialogues where issues of race and religion are freely discussed are at paragraphs 6.41 and 11.29.

9. Article 5 – Rights and Freedoms

9.1 Residents of Singapore, irrespective of race, enjoy strong protection of their rights and freedoms equally. These rights extend across various aspects of life which are elaborated in this section as follows: (i) equal treatment before the law, (ii) progress in socio-economic outcomes such as rising income levels, and access to education, employment and health; and (iii) equal treatment in the criminal justice system. This section also addresses rights and freedoms of non-residents such as migrant workers and migrant domestic workers.

9.2 Singapore recognises the importance of being able to monitor these outcomes through the collection and analysis of race-disaggregated data. Such information enables us to evaluate and review our measures, ensuring we can improve and serve our people more effectively. Where relevant, these outcomes and data are elaborated in this section.

[28] Channel News Asia (Apr 2024), https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/food-delivery-rider-jailed-placed-pork-mosque-4241986.

Equal treatment before the law

9.3 As outlined in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3 of this Report, the Constitution provides for equality of all persons before the law and equal protection of the law, which extends to protection against racial discrimination.

9.4 The responsibility and duty of the Government to care for the interests of the racial and religious minorities in Singapore are enshrined in Article 152(1) of the Constitution. The Government carries out this responsibility by consulting minority groups on policies that could affect them, as outlined in paragraphs 6.25 to 6.35 of this Report.

9.5 The Government's efforts in ensuring equality in treatment is tangible amongst the minority groups in Singapore. According to the IPS-OPSG Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony 2024 study, more than 90% of minorities felt that they were treated much better than, better than, or about the same as other races when using public service ranging from the criminal justice system to educational, health and social services.[29]

Progress in socio-economic outcomes through race-based statistics

9.6 In response to paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Concluding Observations on race-based data, the Singapore Government collects, monitors, analyses and makes available a wide range of data, which includes race- and community-based statistics. This data is integral to the formulation of our policies, including those which are designed to address race-specific disparities, and to monitor our progress in eliminating racial discrimination.

9.7 Singapore regularly publishes such information in different modes to ensure accessibility, including general publication online. Some examples of publicly available data with breakdown by ethnicity include the following:

a. For education, the Government publishes data on the literacy rates and the highest qualification attained. This data is at paragraphs 9.22 to 9.24 of this Report.

b. For income, the Government publishes data on household income. Details are at paragraphs 9.14 to 9.15 of this Report.

c. For other important social areas, the Government publishes data on race and religion among others. These can be found at paragraphs 3.7 to 3.9 of this Report.

d. Data on workplace discrimination complaints on the basis of race, language or religion can be found at paragraphs 10.5 and 10.8 of this Report.

9.8 Singapore strives to make race-disaggregated data available to the best of our abilities. However, we recognise that this might not be possible in all cases as the sharing of such data must be weighed against the potential sensitivities of ethnic communities' circumstances and needs. We take care to avoid information being taken out of context or weaponised to perpetuate harmful narratives that would strain our multi-racial and multi-religious social fabric.

9.9 The Singapore Government takes a considered, case-by-case approach to the collection and publication of data and statistics. A number of factors are considered, including whether the publication of data and statistics helps further policy objectives, and whether the nature and substance of the data is appropriate for public consumption.

9.10 Ultimately, Singapore's approach is guided by what helps us ensure that our policies meet the needs of our population. Disaggregated data and statistics are one, but by no means the only, yardstick against which we measure our policy effectiveness.

9.11 Even in cases where data may not be released publicly, where appropriate, the Government would discuss such data with community leaders from different racial and religious groups

[29] "Results from the IPS-OPSG Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony 2024", IPS Working Papers No. 59, 2025, figures 6.2.1a to 6.2.1e at pages 103 to 106.

or other stakeholders confidentially. The Government assesses when and to which stakeholders to release the data, and is guided by what is in the public interest, including the relative benefit of so doing against any negative impact. By consulting the community, we can ensure that that we can develop targeted interventions for specific ethnic communities to achieve the best possible outcome.

Socio-economic outcomes of minorities

9.12 Meritocracy is a fundamental principle in Singapore. We strive to provide equal opportunities by ensuring that all people can progress on individual merit regardless of race. At the same time, the Government is mindful that policies and programmes should be inclusive of people from different racial and religious backgrounds and should address socio-economic challenge faced by particular minority communities. Hence, we have put in place policies to provide support for such vulnerable individuals and groups.

9.13 In response to paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Concluding Observations on the situation of ethnic minorities, there are various aspects of life that all people in Singapore, including our minorities, have improved in. These include: (i) rising income levels and addressing inequality; (ii) equal access to education, healthcare and employment; and (iii) greater protection from racial discrimination.

Rising income levels and addressing inequality

Rising income for all

9.14 Growth in household income from work was observed across the different racial groups in Singapore, including among minority racial groups. From 2010 to 2020, median household income from work grew by 3.4% per annum (or 2.1% in real terms) for Chinese households, 2.8% per annum (or 1.4% in real terms) for Malay households and 3.5% per annum (or 2.2% in real terms) for Indian households.[30]

9.15 After accounting for household size, growth in median household income from work per household member was the highest among Malay households, with a growth of 4.3% per annum (or 3.0% in real terms) between 2010 and 2020. This was followed by Chinese households at 4.2% per annum (or 2.9% in real terms) and Indian households at 3.9% per annum (or 2.5% in real terms).[31]

Addressing inequality

9.16 Singapore recognises that any inequality, especially inequality which affects members of ethnic minorities, needs to be addressed. For instance, as part of our efforts to address income inequality, we emphasise shared responsibility, where the individual's efforts are complemented with support from their families, their community and the Government.

9.17 The Government aims to uplift all families through our policies and programmes. Such policies range from creating conditions for growth and opportunities to providing a social safety net. Specific policies include:

a. Broad-based transfers and subsidies for the needs of the people, with more support going to those from lower-income backgrounds. For instance, education subsidies (for pre-school**,** primary, secondary and pre-university students) are universal for Singapore citizens. Healthcare and public housing are also heavily subsidised, to maintain affordability.

[30] Census 2020.
[31] Census 2020.

b. Targeted support for those in greater need. For example:

i. Support for lower-wage workers through schemes such as the (1) Progressive Wage Model, which sets productivity-supportive wage ladders for workers to increase their earnings; (2) Workfare Income Supplement scheme, which tops up the salaries of lower-income workers; (3) Workfare Skills Support scheme; and (4) SkillsFuture programmes which incentivise training and boost career mobility. These schemes help lower-income individuals and families improve their overall employment and financial prospects.

ii. The ComCare assistance scheme provides social assistance to lower-income individuals and families who need help with basic living expenses.

iii. The ComLink+ scheme goes beyond providing assistance for basic needs by empowering lower-income families to achieve their aspirations. Family coaches and volunteer befrienders journey with families over the long term on customised action plans to meet their needs and achieve their aspirations. In this way, the Government and the community work together to provide comprehensive, convenient, and coordinated support to families.

9.18 To bolster the national efforts, the Government also works closely with partners from specific ethnic communities to develop programmes tailored to the needs and profiles of different families and vulnerable individuals in their community.

9.19 There are five ethnic community-based Self-Help Groups which provide assistance to low-income persons and families. The Self-Help Groups are funded by voluntary contributions from the respective ethnic communities and financial grants from the Government and provide targeted community-based assistance to their respective ethnic communities, complementing national schemes. The Self-Help Groups also collaborate effectively to promote racial cohesion and uplift the community through joint tuition programmes that cater to students across ethnic groups. More details of the Self-Help Groups are at paragraphs 7.45 to 7.46 of the Initial Report.

9.20 One example of a specific ethnic community measure since the submission of the Initial Report is the greater collaborative effort to meet the needs and aspirations of the Malay/Muslim community by improving service delivery and expanding efforts to uplift the community. The Government has systematically strengthened inter-agency collaboration with key religious and community institutions within the Malay/Muslim community, namely MENDAKI, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS), and the People's Association Malay Activity Executive Committees Council. This partnership galvanises resources, networks, and expertise within the community to, amongst other things, support vulnerable individuals and their families, empower youths, create a more resilient workforce, and support community health initiatives. There has been significant progress in education, employment outcomes and income levels for the Malay/Muslim community over the past decade. The Government will continue to partner community organisations and support community initiatives to uplift and empower our minority groups.

9.21 The other ethnic-based Self-Help Groups, such as SINDA, the Chinese Development Assistance Council, and the Eurasian Association run a wide range of initiatives for the Indian, Chinese and Eurasian communities respectively, from educational support to family assistance to youth mentorship.

Equal access to education

Improved educational outcomes for all ethnic communities

9.22 Singapore has a strong education system. The literacy rate among the resident population aged 15 years and over remained high at 97.1% in 2020. The high rate of literacy was observed across the different racial groups, including minority communities, at 96.8% for the

Chinese community, 97.9% for the Malay community, and 98.4% for the Indian community.[32]

9.23 All our ethnic communities have made significant improvements in their educational attainment over the past decade:[33]

a. Among Malay residents aged 25 years and over, the proportion who had post-secondary or higher qualifications increased from 31% in 2010 to 48% in 2020, closing the gap with other ethnic groups.

b. Among Indian residents aged 25 years and over, the proportion who had post-secondary or higher qualifications increased from 59% in 2010 to 67% in 2020.

c. Among Chinese residents aged 25 years and over, the proportion who had post-secondary or higher qualifications increased from 46% in 2010 to 58% in 2020.

9.24 In addition, youths from across all ethnic communities have reached higher levels of educational attainment over the past decade. More than 80% of youths from all ethnic communities possessed post-secondary or higher qualifications in 2020, as follows:[34]

a. Among Malay youths aged 25 to 34, the proportion with post-secondary or higher qualifications increased from 63% in 2010 to 82% in 2020.

b. Among Indian youths aged 25 to 34, the proportion with post-secondary or higher qualifications increased from 84% in 2010 to 88% in 2020.

c. Among Chinese youths aged 25 to 34, the proportion with post-secondary or higher qualifications increased from 84% in 2010 to 93% in 2020.

9.25 Such data affirm the tangible impact of the Singapore Government's comprehensive suite of measures to improve education outcomes, including targeted measures for specific ethnic communities. These measures are elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Additional support to uplift specific ethnic communities

9.26 In Singapore, the principle of meritocracy has enabled individuals and families to realise their potential and progress over time, regardless of race, language, religion, ancestry or background. In turn, this has facilitated upward social mobility.

9.27 At the same time, Singapore does not pursue meritocracy as an isolated principle. The Singapore Government is cognisant that some individuals and groups, including those from ethnic minorities, may face greater challenges or disadvantages. As such, the Government channels additional resources and targeted interventions for groups that are disadvantaged to ensure equitable access to opportunities for all.

9.28 Under this needs-based approach, the Government channels significant support to students with greater needs at every stage of education:

a. Financial assistance schemes are available to ensure no Singaporean student is prevented from accessing education due to financial difficulties.

b. Enhanced school resourcing better supports schools with more disadvantaged students.

c. After-school programmes provide an environment for holistic development after school, especially for those without a conducive home environment.

d. Partnerships between schools and the community strengthen holistic support for disadvantaged students.

9.29 Beyond our system-wide interventions, the Singapore Government also aims to address unique challenges faced by specific ethnic groups. As such, the Government has stepped up our partnership with, and support for these communities. The Self-Help Groups, such as

[32] Census 2020.
[33] Census 2020.
[34] Census 2020.

MENDAKI and SINDA, are important partners in serving the needs of the respective ethnic communities. For instance, our national schools partner with MENDAKI to engage and support Malay/Muslim students and their families. Their programmes not only provide academic support for students throughout their education journey, but through initiatives like mentoring, also provide long-term uplifting and support by empowering youth to achieve their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

9.30 Similarly, SINDA supports students and young adults in attaining higher education and upgrading their skills through various initiatives, such as scholarships. In 2024, SINDA awarded 20 individuals with scholarships worth SGD 179,766 and increased their investment in education programmes by 22% compared to the previous year.[35]

Access to employment

Employment of headscarf-wearing Malay/Muslim women

9.31 Different ethnic and religious groups live and work together in Singapore. The Government is secular and seeks to maintain and expand a common public space in our society where people interact with one another and are treated fairly, regardless of their cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

9.32 As society evolves, the Government adjusts national policies to respond to the changing needs and aspirations of our people. For highly sensitive matters of race and religion, this is done carefully to preserve the trust and harmony between our diverse communities. In 2021, the Government announced that female Malay/Muslim public healthcare staff would have the option of wearing the headscarf with their uniform, if they wished to do so. This decision came after extensive consultation and deliberation with the community and relevant stakeholders. Senior Cabinet Ministers, including then-Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, held dialogues with community and religious leaders on the issue, to understand community sentiments and hear feedback. MUIS and medical experts were also involved in the discussions. These engagements allowed the Government to better understand the aspirations of the Malay/Muslim community to practise their religion, including the aspirations of Malay/Muslim women to don headscarves as an outward expression of their faith and identity. A set of implementation and clinical guidelines were developed by an Implementation Steering Committee and Clinical Advisory Panel appointed by the Ministry of Health to uphold the occupational safety and patient care standards.

9.33 Singapore recognises that our policies must preserve our common space while also addressing the cultural requirements of various communities, to maintain social cohesion and harmony. There remains a limited number of work situations where headscarves are not allowed, such as where operational and safety considerations are prioritised. Some private sector employers have uniform or dress code requirements to suit the nature of their work. The Government continues to seek feedback from the public to better calibrate national policies.

Access to health

9.34 The Government is committed to ensuring that all citizens and residents, regardless of race, age or income have equal access to affordable healthcare. Citizens and residents have also enjoyed improvements in health outcomes, such as in life expectancy. Further details can be found at paragraphs 6 to 13 of the Follow-Up Report.

Addressing racial discrimination in the residential property rental market

9.35 Close to 90% of resident households in Singapore own their homes, with less than 10% renting on the open market. For the latter group, the Government is fully committed to addressing complaints of racial discrimination in the residential property rental market.

[35] "SINDA Annual Report 2024", https://www.sinda.org.sg/publication/ar2024/.

9.36 Property agencies and agents are required by law to comply with the Council for Estate Agencies' (CEA) Code of Ethics and Professional Client Care. The Code states that property agencies and agents shall not do anything which brings discredit or disrepute to the real estate agency industry, such as putting up property advertisements that are discriminatory or offensive towards any particular race or religion. Property agencies and agents who fail to comply with the CEA's Code may face enforcement action, including letters of warning or censure, financial penalties, or the suspension or revocation of a licence or registration.

9.37 The public can lodge complaints with the CEA if they encounter any potentially offensive or discriminatory property advertisements by property agencies and agents. The number of complaints against property agents received by the CEA that relate to racial and religious discrimination is low. From 2021 to 2024, the CEA received 68 such complaints, which is about 1.5% of total complaints in that period.

Criminal justice system

9.38 As a sovereign state, Singapore has the right to develop our own criminal justice system and to determine the most appropriate legal penalties in accordance with our international law obligations. In Singapore's experience, having strict laws deters serious crimes and this approach has worked well for us. Singapore remains one of the safest places in the world – while being one of the most diverse at the same time – and we continue to rank very highly against global benchmarks. Singapore has been consistently ranked in the top two countries, and was ranked first for the 12th time in 2024 for Law and Order by Gallup's Global Law and Order Index. In 2024, 98% of respondents in Singapore felt safe walking alone at night.[36] Our strict laws are also complemented by our fair and impartial criminal justice system, and an independent and effective judiciary. Singapore was ranked first in criminal justice within the East Asia and Pacific region, and among the top globally in the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2024.[37]

9.39 At paragraph 22(a) of the Concluding Observations, the Committee recommended that Singapore review and amend its "laws and policies leading to racially disparate impacts in the criminal justice system" and implement "effective national strategies or plans of action aimed at eliminating structural discrimination", particularly in relation to offences of drug trafficking. Ethnicity, race and socio-economic status play no part in the professional discharge of duties by law enforcement agencies in Singapore, in the prosecutorial decisions of the Public Prosecutor, and in the decisions of the judiciary. Pursuant to our obligations under the ICERD, Singapore's laws apply equally to all, regardless of race, colour, descent, ethnic origin, religion or nationality. All persons are treated equally and accorded due process under our laws.

9.40 The Committee further recommended, at paragraph 22(b) and (c) of the Concluding Observations, that Singapore apply a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to abolishing it, and prohibit the use of corporal punishment, such as caning. We respectfully disagree that the solution to any perceived racially disparate outcomes in the criminal justice system is to soften our approach on crime. To adopt this approach would be to make justice dependent on ethnicity and socio-economic status, which cannot be the case. In any event, there is no international consensus against the use of the capital punishment or that it amounts to torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment when it is imposed in accordance with due process of law and judicial safeguards. Likewise, judicially imposed corporal punishment is not prohibited under customary international law. There is also no international consensus that corporal punishment in all its forms is incompatible with international human rights law. Sovereign states retain the right to determine the most appropriate penalties in accordance with their national circumstances, in accordance with their international law obligations.

9.41 Drug trafficking inflicts very serious harms, not only on individual abusers, but also families and the wider society. We should remember and be concerned about the many thousands of

[36] Gallup, "The Global Safety Report", 2025.
[37] World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2024, https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2024/Singapore/Criminal%20Justice/.

lives which drug traffickers destroy. The drug traffickers make a cynical calculation to traffic drugs for personal gains and disregard the lives they would destroy.

9.42 At the same time, the Singapore Government has placed great emphasis on developing a comprehensive harm prevention strategy which includes (i) preventive drug education; and (ii) evidence-based rehabilitation and aftercare. On (i), the Singapore Government engages with schools and community groups to bolster awareness of the harmful effects of drugs. On (ii), the Singapore Government invests heavily in rehabilitation and aftercare of persons with drug addictions. Singapore believes in the importance of a strong ecosystem comprising Government agencies, the families of such individuals, and a diverse network of community partners to facilitate their reintegration into the society. Drug rehabilitation is mandated, as interventions are necessary to help such persons reduce their dependence on drugs and to reintegrate back into society. Such persons are also given vocational training and other skills upgrading opportunities, so as to maximise their chances of long-term desistance.

9.43 Drug addiction is a complex problem that affects all segments of society. The Singapore Government works with various community partners, across racial and religious groups, to ensure a culturally sensitive approach in putting out anti-drug messages and in supporting persons with drug addiction. For example, under the "Dadah Itu Haram" (Malay for "Drugs are Forbidden (in Islam)") campaign targeting the Malay/Muslim community, the Singapore Government has worked with mosques, the Malay/Muslim Organisations (MMOs) and various community partners to spread the drug prevention message and implement various initiatives to build the community's resilience against drugs. MMOs also work closely to provide holistic support to persons recovering from drug dependence in their rehabilitation journey, such as partnering informal recovery support groups to provide befriending programmes.

9.44 More broadly, the Singapore Government adopts a holistic and robust multi-sectoral approach to uplift all communities, especially ethnic minority communities. One example is our approach towards education for minority communities as described in paragraphs 9.26 to 9.30 above. Specifically, to support inmates and ex-offenders from minority communities, the Government established the MMO Rehabilitation Network (MMORN) in November 2021. MMORN brings together Government agencies, MMOs and other community partners, to strengthen culturally sensitive support to address the specific needs of Malay/Muslim inmates and ex-offenders, and help them to rehabilitate and re-integrate into society. For example, volunteers from mosques and faith-based MMOs provide faith-based guidance to prison inmates. MMOs also engage and provide socio-emotional support to the family of inmates and ex-offenders.

<u>Eliminating Racial profiling in law enforcement</u>

9.45 In response to paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Concluding Observations on racial profiling in law enforcement, Singapore adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards racial profiling. Officers are trained to consider a range of operational and situational factors, such as an individual's behaviour and intelligence received in the course of their duties.

9.46 Law enforcement officers are trained to treat all individuals fairly, professionally and with empathy, regardless of race, language, religion or nationality. Law enforcement officers are expected to carry out their duties in a manner consistent with the constitutional principle of equality. In addition to being firm and fair in enforcing the law, law enforcement officers are also expected to be sensitive to the feelings of each person when attending to cases. In the course of their duties, officers take into account the racial and religious beliefs and practices of victims and suspects, and ensure sensitivity in their approach. Such sensitivity is especially important in Singapore's multi-racial context.

9.47 The Singapore Police Force (Police) acts in accordance with established operating procedures, training and doctrines aligned with the laws of Singapore. All Police officers are trained to exercise empathy in their interpersonal relationships and dealings with others in the course of their duties, which is part of their basic training. Frontline officers receive additional formative training on how to sensitively manage victims and handle delicate social situations. While the Police may also carry out checks on persons whom they suspect of being

involved in criminal offences, which may include requesting a person's identification, these checks are not conducted on the basis of race.

9.48 We note that these practices are generally in line with General Recommendation 36 of the Committee, for appropriate training to raise awareness of law enforcement agencies and to counter discrimination and facilitate effective engagement with different groups of communities.

9.49 As a result, there is strong public confidence and trust in the Police serving with integrity and enforcing our laws fairly. According to an IPS study in 2024, more than 90% of minorities felt that they were treated much better than, better than, or about the same as other races if they reported a crime or were suspected to having committed an offence.[38] Further, the Government regularly conducts public perception surveys on public trust in the Police. The latest survey in 2024 revealed a very high level of trust not found in most places in the world, where more than 90% of the respondents said they trust the Police.[39] The IPS World Values Survey 2020 found that 87% of respondents, nearly 9 in 10, were confident or very confident in the Police, which is the highest among state institutions in Singapore, and the best in the world. Singapore remains one of the safest places in the world and we continue to rank very highly against global benchmarks. For instance, the 2022 Gallup Global Law and Order report found that 93% of Singaporeans had trust and confidence in the Police.[40]

Rights of non-residents

Rights of migrant workers and migrant domestic workers

9.50 Singapore fully appreciates the valuable contributions of our migrant workers and migrant domestic workers (MDWs) to Singapore's society. In response to paragraphs 23 and 24 of the Concluding Observations, since 2018, Singapore has significantly improved the rights of migrant workers and MDWs through: (i) enhanced legislative protection for healthcare access, improved accommodation standards and mandatory rest days; (ii) support measures and resources such as expanded social and recreational options; and (iii) recourse and remedies such as helplines and legal assistance.

9.51 This comprehensive suite of measures demonstrates Singapore's commitment to the protection of rights of our migrant workers and MDWs. These significant improvements have had tangible results. MOM's Migrant Domestic Worker Study in 2021 and Migrant Worker Experience Survey in 2024 showed that over 9 in 10 migrant workers and MDWs were satisfied working and living in Singapore and would recommend Singapore as a place to work. These findings affirm the positive impact of ongoing efforts to uplift standards, enhance liveability and care for our migrant workers and MDWs.

Legislative protection

General regulatory framework

9.52 Singapore has strong regulatory frameworks that safeguard the well-being of migrant workers and MDWs. Apart from Singapore's main labour legislation, the Employment Act, which applies to migrant workers, the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act (EFMA) is the key law which specifically regulates the employment of migrant workers and MDWs. Singapore has customised protections for MDWs under the EFMA as the workplaces of MDWs differ from non-domestic workers. In doing so, Singapore is fully cognisant of the particular vulnerabilities of female MDWs. The customised and comprehensive protection for MDWs under the EFMA includes the provision of medical care, medical insurance,

[38] "Results from the IPS-OPSG Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony 2024", IPS Working Papers No. 59, 2025, figure 6.2.1e at page 106.
[39] Singapore Police Force, Public Perception Survey 2024.
[40] Gallup, "Global Progress on Safety, Confidence in Police Stalls", 2022, https://news.gallup.com/poll/403937/global-progress-safety-confidence-police-stalls.aspx.

proper accommodation, adequate food and rest, a safe working environment, and timely payment of salaries, which are not included under the Employment Act.

9.53 The Government continually updates its policies to ensure that MDWs rest and recharge from work, and are able to form networks of support outside the household. Since January 2023, all employers must provide their MDWs with a minimum of one rest day a month, that cannot be compensated with salary. This enhances the previous policy that MDWs are entitled to one rest day a week, which can be compensated with salary.

Healthcare

9.54 In 2023, MOM enhanced the mandatory in-patient and day surgery medical insurance for all migrant workers and MDWs by increasing the SGD 15,000 annual claim limit to SGD 60,000, which over 99% of bills are estimated to fall within. The Singapore Government further enhanced migrant workers' access to quality and affordable primary care. Since 2022, employers of migrant workers living in dormitories and/or working in the Construction, Marine Shipyard and Process sectors are required to purchase and maintain a Primary Care Plan (PCP) for their workers. The PCP provides migrant workers access to unlimited acute or chronic medical consultations and treatments, round-the-clock telemedicine services and an annual basic health screening. Under the PCP, migrant workers need only pay a fixed nominal fee of SGD 5 for each visit at these medical centres and SGD 2 for each telemedicine consult. In a National University of Singapore Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health study published in September 2024, 88% of migrant workers expressed willingness to utilise PCP due to affordability and accessibility of its medical centres and in-dormitory clinics.

9.55 In respect of paragraph 23(c) and 24(c) of the Concluding Observations, MDWs are required to undergo medical screenings every six months for infectious diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis. The public health risk posed by long-stayers with undetected and uncontrolled HIV is not insignificant and may affect Singapore's current low HIV rates. Singapore will continue to closely monitor the local epidemiological data and scientific advances in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment strategies to fine-tune our policies and interventions for an effective national response in Singapore.

9.56 Pregnancy testing is part of Singapore's non-discriminatory enforcement of our laws which disallows all work permit holders, including MDWs, to become pregnant while in Singapore. Singapore appreciates the contributions that work permit holders have made to Singapore and treats them fairly in accordance with the rule of law. These include being transparent with work permit holders through their work permit conditions that no work permit holder is allowed to get pregnant or give birth in Singapore, unless they are legally married to a Singapore citizen or permanent resident. Singapore also makes known to first-time MDWs at the compulsory Settling-In Programme that a breach of work permit conditions could lead to revocation of their work permit and repatriation.

9.57 This policy is shaped by two considerations. First, Singapore is a very small and densely populated country. Work permit holders make up about 30% of our total workforce. We thus need to take a calibrated approach on immigration and pregnancy matters as we are unable to support large numbers of foreign workers starting families in Singapore.

9.58 Second, Singapore adopts a protective approach towards work permit holders because of their lower income levels and vulnerability. Employers are responsible for purchasing health insurance and bearing the healthcare costs of their work permit holders. In consideration of this, we have made it a work permit condition that they do not get pregnant while in Singapore. This policy also protects them from vulnerabilities associated with being pregnant, far from home without the necessary familial and social support.

Housing

9.59 The occurrence of COVID-19 made it clear that changes needed to be made in respect of accommodation for migrant workers. As a result, the Government worked closely with dormitories to significantly improve the quality of migrant worker housing in the past few years. We significantly expanded our regulatory coverage of the Foreign Employee Dormitories Act from 1 April 2023 to 1,500 facilities, compared to 50 previously. The Singapore Government also imposed higher living standards for new dormitories approved from September 2021, and about 200 such dormitories have started operations thus far. There

is a transition plan to upgrade existing dormitories to interim standards by 2030 and to the new standards by 2040.[41] Finally, MOM is building two new migrant worker purpose-built dormitories as a testbed for innovation in health resilience and liveability, with the aim to improve practices in migrant worker housing.

Enforcement

9.60 The Singapore Government takes a serious view of abuse of MDWs. If convicted, errant employers will face severe penalties under the law. The Penal Code sets out the punishments for offences such as physical hurt. To provide MDWs additional protection, the Penal Code was amended in 2019 to double the maximum punishment for offences against an MDW if the accused is her employer, a member of her employer's household or her employment agent. The perpetrator and the household will be permanently banned from employing another MDW.

Support measures and resources

9.61 The laws above are supplemented by other measures to meet migrant workers' and MDWs' needs in other areas such as support for harmonious working relationships, as well as their social and recreational needs.

Education and awareness

9.62 First-time migrant workers and MDWs are required to attend the Settling-in Programme, which covers topics including their employment rights, local laws and available support channels. MDWs also learn to manage stress and communicate effectively with their employers. The Settling-in Programme for migrant workers includes topics such as good practices for dormitory living and safety in the workplace.

Outreach and engagement

9.63 For MDWs, we have measures in place to detect signs of abuse quickly. These include enhanced six-monthly medical examinations, post-placement checks by employment agencies, house visits by MOM, and interviews conducted with CSOs. These enhanced touchpoints provide MDWs with safe channels to surface concerns and access support beyond their employers' households. MOM had also enhanced the SGWorkPass mobile application, an application which allows one to access their digital work pass, to be available in several languages native to many MDWs. In 2024, MOM launched a dedicated WhatsApp channel to provide MDWs with 24/7 access to reliable information, helplines and timely updates in English, Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Tagalog and Tamil.

9.64 Supporting and caring for migrant workers and MDWs requires a whole-of-society effort. We will continue to work closely with our stakeholders, including with CSOs and our community partners, to strengthen support for our migrant workers and MDWs, and to promote understanding between citizens, and migrant workers and MDWs. Further details are set out at paragraphs 11.21 to 11.24 of this Report.

Recreation and mental health

9.65 The Government fully respects the right to freedom of movement of migrant workers and MDWs. They are free to visit any part of Singapore. To facilitate access and convenience, we have built eight recreation centres island-wide which offer dining options, products and activities familiar to home. MOM works with partners to organise recreational programmes to foster mutual understanding and stronger bonds between Singaporeans and migrant workers. This includes Racial Harmony Day celebrations and festive events, enabling migrant workers to appreciate Singapore's cultural diversity. The Government also co-funds HealthServe's[42] round-the-clock helpline service with native speaking counsellors as well as peer support leader training and mental health education workshops to strengthen the mental health literacy and resource support within the migrant worker community.

[41] The improved dormitory standards will reduce the risk of infectious disease transmission through requirements such as a room occupancy cap of 12 residents, en-suite toilets and increased isolation facility capacity, whilst enhancing liveability with more living space per resident and in-room Wi-Fi coverage.

[42] HealthServe is a volunteer-run charity that provides healthcare and social support services to migrant workers.

Trade unions

9.66 Migrant workers have the same rights to join trade unions as any other worker in Singapore. There is no restriction for migrant workers who meet the definition of "workman" in the Trade Unions Act to join trade unions.

Facilitating transfers of migrant workers

9.67 Migrant workers do not need their employer's consent to change employers nearing the end of their work permits (21 to 40 days before expiry), or anytime if the employer has breached employment laws, such as non-payment of salary. This ensures that in situations where the migrant worker and employer are unable to reach a mutually agreeable renewal, the migrant worker can move to another employer and continue working in Singapore.

9.68 To facilitate transfers of migrant workers, MOM has implemented an online reference channel for employers of migrant workers to leave their contact details and make themselves available to provide personal references for their migrant workers. A prospective employer who wishes to find out more about a migrant worker has the option to contact the former employer directly to perform the reference check and to verify any feedback provided. In a similar vein, the prospective employer can also interview the migrant worker directly to hear their side of the story before making a hiring decision. This online channel does not allow anyone, whether employer or migrant worker, to post unsubstantiated comments. The contact details of the migrant worker's former employer are also only valid for two years.

Recourse and remedies

9.69 Notwithstanding the extensive support in place, Singapore recognises the importance of ensuring that migrant workers and MDWs can seek help and have access to legal assistance.

9.70 The Singapore Government operates a helpline for MDWs in distress and introduced the Care Sisters initiative in 2022 for MDWs to provide ground feedback and peer support. This initiative acts as a first responder network.

9.71 Migrant workers and MDWs who need legal assistance can seek free legal guidance at Migrant Worker Legal Clinics, which are conducted both online and in-person. Interpretation is available in Bengali, Hindi, and Tamil for these clinics. These clinics are organised by Pro Bono SG in partnership with Angullia Mosque, run with the help of volunteer legal professionals, interpreters and students, and supported by cross-referrals from the Migrant Workers Group. Further information on how such clinics fit within other access to justice mechanisms for migrant workers and MDWs may be found at paragraphs 10.10 to 10.13 of this Report.

<u>Refugees and asylum seekers</u>

9.72 In response to paragraphs 25 and 26 of the Concluding Observations on refugees and asylum seekers, as one of the smallest and most densely populated countries in the world with limited land, Singapore is not in a position to accept those seeking political asylum or refugee status, regardless of their reason for seeking refuge, due to our physical limitations.

9.73 Nonetheless, Singapore views the humanitarian treatment of such persons seriously and provides humanitarian assistance on compassionate grounds.

9.74 We also respect the principle of non-refoulement under customary international law. We work with organisations such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to provide humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers and refugees and help ensure their safe departure to a third country within an acceptable time frame.

<u>Citizenship for stateless persons and children</u>

9.75 In response to paragraphs 25 and 26 of the Concluding Observations on citizenship for stateless children, each application for Singapore citizenship, including those submitted by stateless individuals, is evaluated on a range of criteria such as economic contributions, educational qualifications, family profile and length of stay in Singapore. Stateless persons can apply for and acquire Singapore citizenship if they meet the necessary requirements. We

assess each application carefully and compassionately, especially for those who have integrated well and can contribute to Singapore.

9.76 Our Constitution automatically confers Singapore citizenship on children born in Singapore to married parents so long as at least one parent is a Singapore citizen.

9.77 A child born in Singapore who is not a Singapore citizen at birth remains eligible for Singapore citizenship through other routes. Children of Singapore citizens who do not obtain Singapore citizenship automatically at birth may apply for Singapore citizenship via their parent's sponsorship. A non-citizen residing in Singapore may also apply for citizenship by registration or naturalisation on satisfying the conditions prescribed in our Constitution.

Human rights treaties

9.78 In response to paragraph 31 of the Concluding Observations, Singapore takes our treaty obligations seriously. We will only sign on to a treaty when we are sure that we can comply fully with all its obligations.

9.79 As mentioned earlier at paragraph 6.31, the Singapore Government has in place an Inter-Ministry Committee on Human Rights to actively review our laws and policies to assess our readiness to ratify additional human rights treaties. Singapore's decision to ratify the ICERD in November 2017 was a product of this comprehensive review mechanism.

9.80 Although we are not party to all international human rights treaties, our policies are largely aligned with the underlying intent and objectives of international human rights law. We will continue to improve our policies in a manner that is in line with the spirit of these treaties and best suited to our national context and realities.

9.81 In response to paragraph 33 of the Concluding Observations, Singapore takes a whole-of-society approach to tackling racism and realising the outcomes of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA). Our policies are aligned with the principles and spirit of the DDPA.

10. Article 6 – Remedies for Victims of Racial Discrimination

10.1 Singapore has a wide range of remedies for victims of racial discrimination in Singapore, including legal measures.

10.2 For example, redress is available through the courts if there is a derogation from the principle of equality and the prohibition against racial discrimination in our Constitution. The paragraphs below supplement, and should be read together with, paragraphs 14 to 20 of the Follow-Up Report.

Employment-based discrimination

10.3 In response to paragraphs 27 and 28 of the Concluding Observations on complaints of employment-based racial discrimination, there are avenues for redress for individuals who face employment discrimination. Since the submission of our Initial Report, Singapore has undertaken significant strides and has enacted legislation to prohibit employment-based discrimination, including on the basis of race, religion and language ability. The WFA (as introduced in paragraphs 6.15 to 6.19 above), sets out the scope of protections against discrimination and employers' obligations. It also expands the range of actions that the Government can take against discriminatory employers, including issuing directions for corrective measures and imposing financial penalties.

10.4 All employers are presently required to adhere to the Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices (TGFEP) which emphasises the principles of fair and merit-based employment. The WFA strengthens this framework by prohibiting discrimination on the basis of a set of protected characteristics, including race, religion and language ability. Together, the TGFEP and WFA send a strong signal that no form of workplace discrimination is tolerated in Singapore.

10.5 Where there are breaches of the TGFEP, or where jobseekers or employees feel that they have been discriminated against, they can approach the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) for advice and assistance. The percentage of workplace discrimination complaints on the basis of race, language or religion is low when compared against the total workplace discrimination complaints received. Between 2018 and 2022, the TAFEP received an average of 315 workplace discrimination complaints each year. Amongst these complaints, an average of 34 complaints were related to discrimination based on race or language, and an average of eight complaints were related to discrimination based on religion.

10.6 All complaints received are assessed by TAFEP. The majority of complaints were misunderstandings which were clarified and where both parties did not pursue the matter further. Where discriminatory practices are found, TAFEP can direct the employer to address the complaints, attend corrective workshops, and correct their employment practices. For egregious cases, TAFEP will refer these employers to MOM for further investigation, and employers may have their work pass privileges suspended.

10.7 Beyond receiving and investigating complaints, TAFEP also educates and builds the capabilities of employers to comply with the TGFEP and to implement the WFA when it comes into force.

10.8 As a result of our efforts, the proportion of individuals that experienced workplace discrimination has trended down over the years. Based on the 2024 Fair Employment Practices report published by MOM, 6.0% of employees experienced discrimination at work in 2023, lower than the percentage in 2022 (8.2%), 2021 (8.5%) and 2018 (24.1%).

Remedies for racial discrimination

10.9 As explained in paragraphs 8.1 to 8.15 of this Report, Singapore has a wide range of laws to prevent incitement to racial discrimination. Our even-handedness in pursuing enforcement proceedings against individuals who engage in racial discrimination is an effective form of redress as it secures protection of the affected individual and brings the specific discriminatory conduct to an end in that particular case. The Singapore Government acknowledges that laws are not a silver bullet for all racial issues. The law on its own cannot prevent insensitivity, or racist slights, from happening in everyday interactions. However, the Singapore Government firmly believes that the law serves as a framework to shape positive social behaviour and promote racial harmony.

Access to justice

10.10 A core tenet of access to justice is the right to equal treatment before the courts. The Singapore courts are known to be impartial, with Singapore ranking eighth globally for Civil Justice[43] and seventh globally for Criminal Justice[44] in the 2024 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index.

10.11 In response to paragraphs 29 and 30 of the Concluding Observations on access to justice, the strong partnership between the Government, the legal fraternity, and civil society to co-

[43] World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2024, https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2024/Singapore/Civil%20Justice/.
[44] World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2024, https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2024/Singapore/Criminal%20Justice/.

deliver legal services helps strengthen Singapore's access to justice ecosystem. This ecosystem comprises Government-funded legal aid, which is available to Singapore citizens and permanent residents, and other forms of legal assistance and legal aid provided by non-government partners, which is available to foreigners, including social service agencies and community partners.

10.12 For example, the Ministry of Law works closely with Pro Bono SG (PBSG) to provide legal aid, assistance, and representation, especially for vulnerable groups. PBSG and the Legal Aid Bureau assist in civil matters, including cases of racial discrimination, although such cases are rare. PBSG's schemes, which include the Criminal Legal Aid Scheme and the Family Justice Support Scheme are available to eligible foreigners. PBSG also runs two Community Law Centres and community legal clinics, alongside other legal clinics run by law firms and volunteer organisations. These are open to all in need, including migrant workers, and cover a range of legal matters. In April 2025, PBSG launched the Migrant Workers' Law Centre in partnership with the National Trades Union Congress Migrant Workers' Centre to enhance access to justice for migrant workers.

10.13 Different stakeholders make significant efforts in providing the community with greater access to pro bono legal advice and representation. This multi-stakeholder approach provides effective and sustainable access to legal aid, for victims to seek legal recourse against any acts of racial discrimination.

Meet-the-People sessions

10.14 In line with Singapore's decentralised approach to remedies, other avenues include raising concerns or instances of racial discrimination directly to Members of Parliament (including the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers) during weekly "Meet-the-People" sessions in their respective electoral constituencies. These concerns are in turn raised with the relevant Government agencies to investigate and provide the relevant assistance.

11. Article 7 – Combating Prejudices and Promoting Inter-Racial Understanding

11.1 Singapore combats and prevents racial discrimination through various measures designed to address prejudice and promote awareness, understanding and appreciation of racial and religious differences within our diverse society.

11.2 We adopt this multi-pronged approach because we recognise that tackling racial discrimination requires more than just laws. While laws play a vital role, it is critical to also change social attitudes.

11.3 Since 2018, Singapore has implemented several key initiatives and programmes to strengthen inter-personal norms of mutual understanding, trust and respect. This requires a whole-of-society effort, where the Government actively partners with community stakeholders to build a cohesive Singapore that transcends racial boundaries, as outlined in this section.

Promoting inter-cultural understanding and appreciation in schools

<u>Education</u>

11.4 Education is a vital lever in cultivating mindsets and dispositions that recognise and disengage from discriminatory practices. The Ministry of Education (MOE) takes great effort to promote multi-cultural understanding and harmonious coexistence and integration among the different racial and religious groups, and we develop this early with our young people in the mainstream school curriculum. Schools have existing practices that facilitate mixing

among students across races and religions, and also leverage partnerships and community programmes to encourage greater mixing.

11.5 Since 2018, we have continued to nurture multi-cultural appreciation in students through enhancements to the curriculum, in tandem with professional development to support teachers in imparting such values.

Curriculum

11.6 Character and Citizenship Education (CCE), a longstanding and integral part of the Singapore education curriculum, was reviewed in 2021 to include more opportunities for students to engage in discussion on contemporary issues, such as race and religion. CCE lessons continue to be intentionally designed to develop deeper multi-cultural appreciation in students by enabling them to learn about the various cultures in Singapore, trends that challenge social cohesion, and build skills and dispositions needed to live harmoniously in our society. For example, as part of a CCE lesson for 12-year-olds, students are guided to share their thoughts and feelings about casual racism, as well as how they could respond to hurtful comments sensibly and respectfully.

11.7 This effort to bring about more effective discussions, and thus deeper understanding of the diverse cultures in Singapore occurs in two types of CCE lessons at the primary level:

a. CCE Form Teacher Guidance Period (FTGP): In general, the student population in each Singapore school is divided into culturally heterogenous form classes which are conducive for the teaching of the lessons on Singapore's cultural diversity as students have the opportunity to learn from one another about their cultural practices and strengthen their cross-cultural literacy.

b. CCE Mother Tongue Language (MTL): CCE lessons are also taught in the 3 official Mother Tongue Languages, namely Chinese, Malay and Tamil, so that students can learn about values though the familiarity of cultural stories and practices of their own community.

11.8 In both CCE (FTGP) and CCE (MTL), students develop their social-emotional competencies to enable them to interact with others and build relationships. Following the 2021 CCE syllabus review, the scope of the CCE primary lesson has been broadened to expose students to a wider variety of perspectives and personal stories. At the secondary and pre-university levels, students engage in regular discussions on contemporary issues that include topics related to race and religion.

Teacher's professional development

11.9 Since 2020, the National Institute of Education, Singapore's teacher training institute for pre-service teachers, and the Student Development Curriculum Division 1 of the MOE have collaborated to incorporate new materials into the teacher training modules geared at building teachers' confidence and competence in navigating racial and religious issues.

11.10 Since 2022, all secondary schools have appointed a select group of specialised CCE teachers who have undergone additional training on facilitating the learning of complex and sensitive CCE-related topics, including topical issues on race and religion. These teachers co-facilitate lessons alongside and also provide coaching for form teachers.

Partnering racial and religious groups

National Steering Committee on Racial and Religious Harmony

11.11 As explained at paragraph 6.29 of this Report, the National Steering Committee on Racial and Religious Harmony is a key national institution to strengthen social cohesion.

Refreshed Racial and Religious Harmony Circles

11.12 At the grassroots level, the Racial and Religious Harmony Circles[45] actively bridge different racial, religious and community groups across Singapore's constituencies.[46] The Harmony Circles were launched in 2002 (formerly known as the Inter-Racial and Religious Harmony Circles), and further details are in paragraphs 12.18 to 12.19 of the Initial Report.

11.13 As our society evolved and new challenges emerged, we implemented strategic changes in 2022 to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of the Harmony Circles.

a. The Harmony Circles significantly expanded their outreach. Membership grew from 1,500 in 2021 to 1,700 in 2023.

b. They deliver new and innovative programmes, bringing people together through a variety of ways, including sports and visits to cultural and heritage sites.

c. As part of Racial Harmony Month, celebrated annually in July, the Harmony Circles partner schools and community organisations on initiatives such as inter-faith dialogues, learning journeys to places of worship, and initiatives to foster a more caring and inclusive society.

Commitment to Safeguard Religious Harmony

11.14 In 2019, our religious leaders, with Government support, drafted the Commitment to Safeguard Religious Harmony to foster a cohesive society, establishing shared values and positive norms of social interaction among people of different religions. Unveiled at the Singapore's first International Conference on Cohesive Societies (details of the Conference can be found at paragraphs 11.25 to 11.27 of this Report), the Commitment was affirmed by more than 750 religious and community organisations.

Crisis Preparedness for Religious Organisations

11.15 Since 2018, Singapore has strengthened partnerships with community leaders to maintain unity during crises. Beyond the SGSecure Community Network established in 2017 (at paragraphs 10.9 to 10.10 of the Initial Report), we have implemented initiatives to enhance religious organisations' capabilities to manage crises with religious overtones.

11.16 For example, the Crisis Preparedness for Religious Organisations programme established in 2020 builds robust crisis preparedness capabilities for religious organisations while encouraging community support for one another during emergencies. Co-created with community partners and religious organisations, programme participants conduct security self-assessments, develop contingency plans, attend and contribute to seminars on best practices, and receive critical skills training including psychological first aid.

Promoting inter-cultural appreciation through the arts

11.17 The Singapore Government cultivates mutual respect and appreciation through inter-cultural appreciation in various art forms.

11.18 One way that Government supports such initiatives is through ArtsEverywhere@CDC, a collaboration launched in 2024 by National Arts Council and People's Association, with support from MCCY.

11.19 The programme aims to increase the reach, access, and spread of the arts by bringing art to neighbourhoods across Singapore. This provides a platform for arts groups to promote inter-

[45] The Harmony Circle in each constituency consists of key leaders and representatives from local religious and ethnic organisations, and informal leaders in the local community.
[46] Constituencies are areas within Singapore demarcated by law for Parliamentary and Presidential elections.

cultural appreciation. For example, the music group yIN Harmony, infuses various cultural instruments in their performances to reflect our multi-racial society.

11.20 The Government also supports the arts groups involved in promoting multi-culturalism through the Harmony Fund. This includes new arts projects since the submission of the Initial Report in 2018, such as A Tapestry of Sacred Music 2025 (details at paragraph 6.40 of this Report).

Promoting inter-cultural understanding between citizens and migrant workers

11.21 MOM builds bridges and promotes inter-cultural understanding between Singaporeans and migrant workers from different races and nationalities. MOM achieves this by working closely with various stakeholders such as NGOs, employers, dormitory operators, community partners and migrant workers. These initiatives include festive celebrations at dormitories and recreation centres. Since 2024, MOM has collaborated with CSOs such as Hope Initiative Alliance (HIA) to organise Racial Harmony Day celebrations amongst migrant workers, local community including youths. Such celebrations, attended by over 1,000 workers help to promote understanding of different cultures, races and religions.

11.22 MOM has also partnered with HIA to promote greater cultural exchanges between Singaporeans and migrant workers. Under this partnership, MOM will support HIA to increase the frequency of activities like heritage tours, inter-faith dialogues and festive celebrations, creating yearly opportunities for 4,000 migrant workers and 1,000 locals to learn about each other's cultures and share experiences.

11.23 In addition, the annual International Migrants Day (IMD) celebration in December showcases the diversity of nationalities and cultures of the migrant workers in Singapore. In 2024, over 75,000 workers participated in the month-long celebrations for IMD alongside the local community.

11.24 MOM also leverages social media platforms to promote understanding and appreciation of migrant workers' contributions in building our nation.

International Conference on Cohesive Societies

11.25 Bridging social divides in an age of polarisation remains essential for a safer and more resilient world. We recognise the value of sharing with and learning from other societies.

11.26 Since 2018, Singapore launched the International Conference on Cohesive Societies to strengthen dialogue, solutions, and global cooperation in building cohesive societies. Three editions in 2019, 2022, and 2025 brought together more than 3,000 global thought leaders, policymakers, community practitioners and young leaders from over 50 countries to exchange ideas, share best practices, and develop innovative solutions to build cohesive and resilient multi-cultural societies worldwide.

11.27 The Conference has inspired participants to launch projects promoting inter-faith harmony. For example, a Singaporean participant from 2022 spearheaded the *Planting Trees of Harmony* initiative in collaboration with local and Indonesian partners. Launched in 2023 at a park in Singapore, this project has planted 50 trees, symbolizing inter-faith and inter-cultural unity.[47]

[47] National Youth Council, "Sowing the seeds of harmony", 2024, https://www.nyc.gov.sg/newsroom/sowing-the-seeds-of-harmony/.

Partnering the next generation

11.28 Besides the national policies and institutions highlighted earlier in this Report, the Government actively champions partnerships with our youth, supporting and empowering youth-driven initiatives to promote social cohesion and encourage meaningful conversations on race and religion.

11.29 An example of this was in September 2024, when MCCY and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore co-organised the "Interreligious Youth with Pope Francis" dialogue to deepen youth engagement. The late Pope Francis hailed the dialogue as a "model of fraternity" and commended Singapore youths' capacity for inter-faith dialogue. This sentiment reflects the broader impact of the ongoing efforts by various community groups such as OnePeople.sg, Inter-Religious Organisation, Roses of Peace, hash.peace, Dialogue Centre, Interfaith Youth Circle and others.

11.30 NYC, in collaboration with other organisations, actively seeks youths' perspectives and works with our youth to build a stronger Singapore, including on issues such as social cohesion and racial discrimination. For example:

a. NYC developed two civic conversation toolkits in 2022 to empower young people to navigate dialogue on sensitive topics such as race, religion and local-foreigner integration. Through collaboration with subject matter experts and school partners, NYC supported over 5,000 youths to engage in honest and constructive conversations in a safe space using these toolkits.

b. NYC is in its third year of collaboration with Singapore's five polytechnics (post-secondary education institutions) to train 1,000 student leaders annually through diversity workshops. This training equips the youth leaders with the skills to promote cross-cultural understanding, so that they can lead as ambassadors of integration and diversity in their institutions.

11.31 MCCY also encourages the community, including Singapore's youth, to leverage platforms such as the Harmony Fund and the Harmony Circles to organise initiatives that strengthen cohesion and harmony. This approach stems from the conviction that building social cohesion and multi-culturalism requires continuous effort, and our greatest strength lies in partnering with our people to forge a better tomorrow.

11.32 These efforts underscore our unwavering commitment to engaging the next generation, ensuring that the fundamental values of multi-culturalism, acceptance and celebration of diversity remain vibrant and enduring pillars of our society. Through this, we strive to create an even better Singapore in the years ahead.