



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

318 EAST 48TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10017
TEL: (212) 826 0840 FAX: (212) 826 2964

**STATEMENT BY MR NATHANIEL KHNG,
COUNSELLOR (LEGAL), PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
ON AGENDA ITEM 171, ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
RELATIONS WITH THE HOST COUNTRY,
SIXTH COMMITTEE,
22 OCTOBER 2020**

1 Singapore thanks the Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, Ambassador Andreas Mavroyiannis, for presenting the Committee's report.

Mr Chair,

2 It is unfortunate to hear that a number of delegations continue to have unresolved concerns, including on issues relating to entry visas and travel restrictions. We have listened carefully to these concerns and the responses of the host country. Singapore remains concerned that the issues that have been raised by delegations may have a negative impact on the work of the General Assembly. We cannot allow the substantive work of the United Nations to be undermined.

3 The issues that have been raised must be resolved in a spirit of cooperation, and in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the Headquarters Agreement and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. There can be no derogation from fundamental principles, such as the principle of sovereign equality which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is equally important that the sovereign right of each Member State to choose its representatives and delegates to the United Nations is respected.

4 We take note of the statement of the UN Legal Counsel, addressed to the Committee on 15 October 2019, in which the Legal Counsel confirmed that the legal position of the United Nations regarding the host country's obligations with respect to the issuance of visas to persons covered by the Headquarters Agreement remains unchanged from that provided by the then-Legal Counsel to

the Committee in 1988. We also note the points that the Legal Counsel has conveyed to the host country authorities, namely, that: the Headquarters Agreement cannot be applied in a discriminatory manner; considerations of a bilateral diplomatic nature should not and cannot interfere with the application of the Headquarters Agreement; the Headquarters Agreement should be applied in a way so as not to impede the effective exercise of diplomatic activity; and inevitable differences in the interpretation and application of the Headquarters Agreement are to be addressed in a reasonable and finite period of time.

5 Singapore calls on the host country and other countries involved to engage with each other with seriousness and seek a resolution in accordance with international law. The active engagement in the process by the UN Secretary-General with the host country, as well as with relevant Member States, is also important. The United Nations is party to the Headquarters Agreement, and the Secretary-General, as its representative, plays a direct and central role in ensuring its effective implementation. In this regard, we appreciate the efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs to regularly meet the authorities of the host country. We also support the Committee's recommendation to encourage the Secretary-General to more actively engage in the work of the Committee with a view to ensuring the representation of the interests concerned.

6 Thank you.

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