



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

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**STATEMENT BY MR MARK SEAH,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SINGAPORE,
ON AGENDA ITEM 84, ON THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL
AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS, SIXTH COMMITTEE,
6 OCTOBER 2022**

1 I would like to begin by reaffirming Singapore's unwavering support for the rule of law. As a small State, the rule of law is fundamental to Singapore's existence. We also believe that the rule of law is fundamental for the maintenance of international peace and security.

2 My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for the report under this agenda item. We take note of the information it contains on the United Nations' rule of law-related activities. We commend, in particular, the United Nations' assistance of efforts to eliminate corruption, which is a scourge that must be eradicated, and provision of needs-based outreach and capacity-building assistance where requested.

3 However, my delegation has the following comments on paragraph 64 of the report, which refers to the United Nations' "support" of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on torture-free trade to examine the feasibility of possible common international standards on the trade of goods used for capital punishment and torture. Singapore and other Member States have expressed deep reservations on the establishment of such standards, including that the General Assembly is not the appropriate body to regulate trade matters and that such standards could be used as an excuse or pretext to introduce protectionist measures, which would undermine a predictable, open and rules-based multilateral trading system. Singapore's position remains that the General Assembly should not proceed to discuss any instrument, binding or non-binding, in relation to such standards. Notably, there was no consensus even within the small and restricted 10-member GGE on the feasibility of establishing such standards in the first place, and, accordingly, it is clear that this matter is not ripe for discussion at the General Assembly or for further action.

4 In addition, Singapore rejects any suggestion—whether from paragraph 64, the mandate of the GGE, General Assembly resolution 73/304 or elsewhere—that capital punishment amounts to torture. To be clear, Singapore does not condone torture. However, there is no international consensus that capital punishment is a form of torture, and no international consensus against or international law prohibiting capital punishment. The lack of consensus is reflected by the significant support for operative paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolutions 71/187, 73/175 and 75/183, entitled “Moratorium on the use of the death penalty”, which reaffirms the sovereign right of all countries to develop their own legal systems, including determining appropriate legal penalties, in accordance with their international law obligations.

5 Turning to the subtopic of this debate, namely, the impacts of the global pandemic on the rule of law, my delegation agrees that the pandemic created unprecedented challenges to the rule of law. We commend international legal and judicial bodies that adopted new procedures and developed new working methods to be able to continue carrying out their mandates. In Singapore, measures were implemented to ensure that legal and judicial bodies continued to function. Our rule of law-related capacity-building activities, including those under the Singapore Cooperation Programme, continued virtually. Our view is that procedures, working methods and measures developed during the pandemic, which have proven capable of facilitating efforts to uphold or strengthen the rule of law, may continue to be relevant and beneficial to keep in place.

6 I conclude by highlighting that the international community celebrates, this year, a significant milestone for the rule of law—the 40th anniversary of the adoption and opening for signature of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which is the foundation of the rule of law for the oceans and seas. In these troubled times, we encourage Member States to draw inspiration from the success of the Convention in our efforts to strengthen the rule of law.

7 Thank you.

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