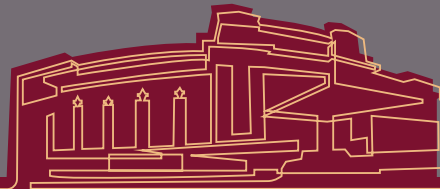
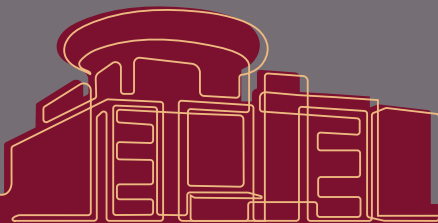


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Opening of the Legal Year 2022: Refining Our Justice System

On 10 January, the Opening of the Legal Year was streamed live from the Supreme Court to about 700 participants on Zoom. Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, Attorney-General Lucien Wong, and the newly appointed President of the Law Society, Adrian Tan, delivered their customary speeches at the annual event over video conference.

In his response, the Chief Justice highlighted three major developments in the past year — the refinement of our justice system, the Judiciary's active engagement with our foreign counterparts, and the collaborative efforts which realised significant initiatives.

Chief Justice Menon highlighted the major developments on the horizon, which included the new civil procedural rules that will come into force this year and three innovations that will support the legal profession in its digital transformation. He then shared his vision for the Judicial Service Commission and how its establishment will ensure a pipeline of talent for the Judiciary.

In closing, the Chief Justice encouraged the legal community to continue working together to further strengthen the justice system in the same collaborative spirit that has long served the legal community well.



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon delivering his response at the Opening of the Legal Year 2022

1. 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Refinement of our Justice System

- The **Appellate Division of the High Court** has been established, allowing the Judiciary to utilise appellate judicial resources more optimally.
- The **Courts (Civil and Criminal Justice) Reform Act 2021** empowers the courts to: (1) conduct proceedings asynchronously without oral arguments, and (2) require parties to attempt amicable resolution in appropriate circumstances. It marks an important step towards the transformation of our justice system and to enhance access to justice.

International Engagements

- Continued contribution to international conversations and engagements.

Participated in the *fifth Singapore-China Legal and Judicial Roundtable* and signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation on Information on Foreign Law with the Supreme People's Court of China.

Deepened links with the Supreme Court of Rwanda.

Hosted the third meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts. Continued to play a leading role in the International Consortium for Court Excellence.

Deepened links with the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea.

Implemented two sets of protocols with the Federal Court of Malaysia in proceedings concerning admiralty and cross-border corporate insolvency matters.

Development through Tripartite Efforts

- Significant initiatives such as the **new Rules of Court 2021**, the **new Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) Rules** and updating the **Costs Guidelines** were realised through the collaborative efforts of the Attorney-General's Chambers, the Bar and the Judiciary.

2. LOOKING AHEAD

The Rules of Court 2021 and new SICC Rules come into force in 2022

Rules of Court 2021

- Guided by 5 ideals: (1) fair access to justice, (2) expeditious proceedings, (3) cost-effective and proportionate processes, (4) efficient use of court resources, and (5) fair and practical results suited to the needs of the parties.
- Commencement date on 1 April.
- Transitional learning phase from 1 April – 30 June.

New SICC Rules

- Drawn from international best practices and driven by three principles: (1) expeditious and efficient administration of justice according to law, (2) procedural flexibility, and (3) fair, impartial and practical processes and procedures, compatible with and responsive to the needs of international commerce.
- Builds on innovative practices of the SICC, such as the additional case management features for matters placed on the SICC's Technology, Infrastructure and Construction List.
- Enhances the SICC's status as a leading commercial court and, in turn, Singapore's standing as a major centre for legal services.

Innovations to better support practitioners

- New LawNet** will be launched in 2022 to serve as a single digital hub to access all of Singapore Academy of Law's content and services.
- Singapore Mediation Centre's **Online Dispute Resolution Service** will be launched by Q1 2022 targeted at reducing the costs of resolving lower value cases such as consumer disputes by using technology and automation.
- Data and Digital Economy Specialist Accreditation Scheme** is expected to be finalised in Q2 2022 to expand the opportunities for lawyers to advance their professional competence and standing and provides users of such services with some indication of special experience.

Establishment of the Judicial Service Commission (14 January)

- Imminent restructuring of the existing Legal Service into the reconstituted Singapore Legal Service and the dedicated Singapore Judicial Service.
- The restructuring enhances the ability of each Service to maximise the opportunity for specialist training and development.
- The work that will be involved includes various facets (1) enhancing, deepening and broadening the judicial skill set, (2) integrating within the judicial mindset, the critical importance of securing and enhancing access to justice, and (3) developing bespoke models of justice having regard to different classes of dispute, such as the Therapeutic Justice model for family matters, and in the area of hypercomplex disputes.
- Establishment of the Singapore Judicial Service allows the opportunity to develop these facets.

Scan the QR Code for Chief Justice's full response and to watch a video highlighting key messages from Chief Justice's response (video featured on SG Courts YouTube channel)

The Family Justice Courts Workplan 2022: Let's Go!



(From left) Presiding Judge of the FJC, Justice Debbie Ong and Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon

The Family Justice Courts (FJC) held their eighth annual Workplan event on 18 March. The Workplan, which was themed "Let's Go!" was attended by staff and invited guests from the Judiciary. Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon was the Guest-of-Honour for the event.

The Presiding Judge of the FJC, Justice Debbie Ong shared in her address that the focus for the Workplan was the implementation of the FJC's initiatives, to transform ideas into real-world solutions. Justice Ong shared the FJC's statistical highlights for 2019 to 2021. Her broad observations were:

- The caseload for 2021 rose and this was mainly due to the increase in the number of probate cases;
- The disposition rates in 2021 had generally recovered to pre-COVID rates; and
- The proportion of divorce cases filed on the simplified track rose slightly to reach 63% in 2021, up from the 60% posted in 2020.

Justice Ong provided a recap of the three strategic thrusts of FJC's plans:

- Furthering Therapeutic Justice (TJ) in a Multi-Disciplinary Environment;
- Facilitating Court Processes, Settlement, and Enforcement and thereby enhance Access to Justice; and
- Fortifying Judges' and Lawyers' Capacity and Capability.

Furthering TJ in a Multi-Disciplinary Environment

To further the cause of TJ, Justice Ong shared that the FJC had piloted a Multi-Disciplinary TJ team-based approach (MDT). 18 out of a total of 25 cases assigned to the pilot had concluded and the remaining seven cases were pending adjudication or further mediation. The next step was for a review to be conducted to identify and integrate key lessons learnt from the pilot.

In 2022, FJC would be embarking on a TJ "Deep Dive" to strengthen FJC's TJ "hardware" to support and encourage TJ practices. The deep-dive would involve deeper scrutiny on how a non-adversarial system could be set-up.

Justice Ong also shared that the FJC would continue to strengthen the integration of community services and referral channels so that the needs of families could be adequately supported by the appropriate specialist support. She updated that the FJC had established expert panels across the family justice landscape such as the Panel of Financial Experts (POFE) and the Panel of Therapeutic Specialists (POTS). The first panel (POFE) would provide parties with practical financial advice and assist the court and parties in arriving at objective valuations of matrimonial assets while the second panel (POTS) would provide the court users with targeted therapeutic assistance.

Facilitating Court Processes, Settlement, and Enforcement (Access to Justice)

To facilitate access to justice, Justice Ong updated that the FJC would review existing "pain-points" and leverage on technology to make the court journey smoother and more navigable. This includes enhancing existing legislative regimes and facilitating transitions to new regimes. She provided some examples of the initiatives which FJC would be doing in 2022, i.e. expanding the features and services of the divorce e-Service, introduction of

the probate e-Service, as well as collaboration with the Community Justice Centre on their introduction of a parenting application which could help reduce conflict in co-parenting.

Justice Ong also updated that the FJC was working with the Public Service Centre (PSC) to avail frontline court services at community touchpoints. For a start, individuals would be allowed to file maintenance enforcement applications at PSC @ Our Tampines Hub from mid-May.

Applicants who wish to apply for maintenance enforcement orders can do so online via the following link: (<https://ifams.gov.sg/>).

Should assistance be required with the online filing of maintenance enforcement orders, applicants may now visit the ServiceSG Centre at Our Tampines Hub for in-person assistance.

Applicants may also continue to seek assistance at FJC or at partner agencies listed at the following link: (<https://www.judiciary.gov.sg/family/apply-enforce-vary-maintenance-order#where-to-apply>).

The ServiceSG Centre at Our Tampines Hub is open Monday to Sunday, 9am to 6pm (closed on Public Holidays). Its address is:

ServiceSG Centre
Our Tampines Hub, 1 Tampines Walk
#01-21, Singapore 528523



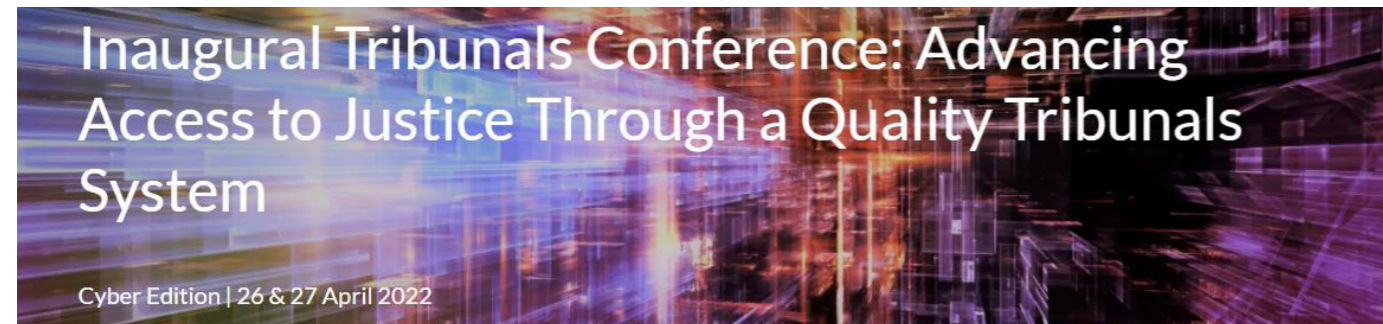
Fortifying Judges' and Lawyers' Capacity and Capability

On the matter of developing capacity and capabilities, Justice Ong thanked the Bench and the Bar for their support in implementing the TJ ethos and practices in family proceedings. She shared that the FJC would continue to fortify judges' capacity as family practice grows in complexity.

In the closing segment of the Workplan address, Justice Ong paid tribute to the commitment and hard work exhibited by all the FJC staff. She also expressed an appreciation to the Chief Justice for his leadership, support for TJ and for the Chief Justice's constant and generous support towards fulfilling the FJC's mission.

Following suit to the tribute, two videos — one that outlined the profile of the FJC's court users and the FJC's initiatives (both past and present), which were tailored to the users, and another demonstrated the journey of a court user, and how the FJC had/would be introducing initiatives to improve access to justice — were screened. The event concluded with a dialogue session with the Chief Justice, Justice Ong and the FJC staff. The dialogue session covered topics such as professional development, the effects of post-COVID on Judiciary operations and the development of family law, amongst others.

Inaugural Tribunals Conference 2022



On 26 and 27 April, the State Courts, in collaboration with the Singapore Academy of Law, hosted Singapore's inaugural Tribunals Conference 2022. Themed "Advancing Access to Justice Through a Quality Tribunals System", the conference provided a platform for distinguished local and international speakers from leading jurisdictions with an established tribunals practice, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom, to share and discuss experiences, learning points, and initiatives on the law and practice of tribunals.

In his keynote address, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon discussed several issues that may arise in relation to the structure and organisation of a tribunals system, as well as the key challenge of managing the tension between coherence and specificity. To this end, Chief Justice Menon mooted the possibility of having a coordinated network system of tribunals,

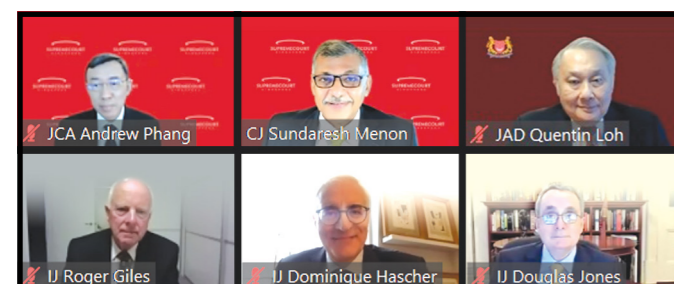
which facilitates coordination and consolidation while allowing room for flexibility and specialisation.

Over five plenary sessions, the two-day virtual conference covered a range of topics, including the expanding role of tribunals, best practices in the conduct of tribunal hearings, leveraging technology to strengthen access to justice, and possible reforms that may shape tribunals practice moving forward.

The Tribunals Conference was attended by more than 100 local and foreign participants. The feedback on the conference was very positive, and many participants stated that they found the conference useful and would recommend it to others. It is part of the ongoing work of the Community Courts and Tribunals Cluster of the State Courts to help promote the standards and best practices for a good tribunal system anchored on the rule of law and due process.

EVENTS & INITIATIVES

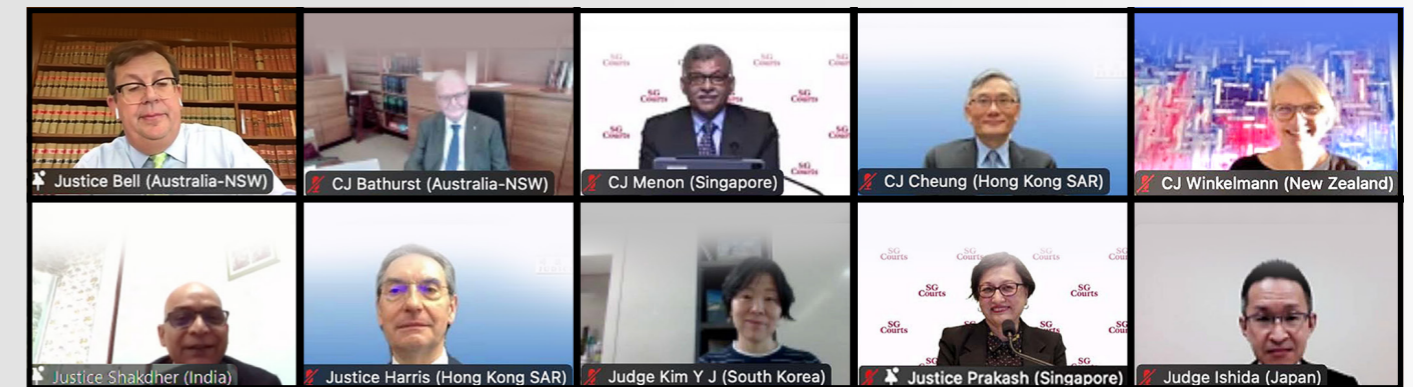
Singapore International Commercial Court Conference 2022



The Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) Conference was held on 11 and 12 January. The virtual conference was attended by the Supreme Court bench and the SICC International Judges to update on action items arising from the last conference and forthcoming initiatives. Joining the SICC for the first time was Justice Yuko Miyazaki from Japan. The annual conference also had members of the Supreme Court Senior Management in attendance. The participants discussed issues around the theme of "Charting a Path Beyond the Pandemic".

Participating judges at the SICC Conference 2022

Seventh Judicial Seminar on Commercial Litigation



Participants at the seventh Judicial Seminar on Commercial Litigation

The Supreme Court of Singapore hosted the seventh Judicial Seminar on Commercial Litigation on 24 and 25 February. Conducted virtually for the first time, the two-day closed-door Seminar was organised along the themes of "Substantive Commercial Law" and "Case and Court Management Issues" and brought together Chief Justices, Judges, and senior judicial representatives from the participating judiciaries to discuss various aspects of commercial litigation and share their legal expertise and experiences.

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon welcomed the participating Judiciaries with his opening remarks followed by an active exchange of in-depth views and best practices that serve to enhance international commercial dispute resolution and strengthen cooperation between courts in cross-border matters.

Chief Justice Menon said: "The Singapore Judiciary is honoured to host this year's Judicial Seminar on Commercial Litigation and pleased to participate in the discussions at the Seminar, which are on topics of critical importance to the future of commercial dispute resolution. As a result of globalisation and the rise of technology, courts around the world operate in an environment that is much more complex and connected and yet also dynamic and unpredictable. There is a growing need to put in place effective and

timely dispute resolution mechanisms, to develop collaborative frameworks for court excellence, and to promote best practices in commercial litigation together with other jurisdictions. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the participating Judiciaries for their invaluable contributions to the discussions. Such dialogues will only strengthen and grow our expertise in resolving commercial disputes."

Chief Justice Bathurst of the Supreme Court of New South Wales said: "The Seminar provides an important opportunity for commercial judges in the Asia-Pacific region to interact and discuss common problems in the administration of commercial law"

Chief Justice Andrew Cheung of the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong SAR, China said: "I thank Chief Justice Menon and the Supreme Court of Singapore for the work they have done in organising the Seminar during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Scan QR code for Chief Justice's keynote address

The Supreme Court of Judicature (Intellectual Property) Rules 2022

The new Supreme Court of Judicature (Intellectual Property) Rules 2022 (SCJIPR 2022) have come into force on 1 April to enhance the intellectual property (IP) dispute resolution system and position Singapore as a choice venue for IP dispute resolution in Asia. This follows the recommendations put forth in the Final Report of the Intellectual Property Dispute Resolution Framework Review Committee.

A “transitional learning phase” from 1 April to 30 June, which applies to the Rules of Court 2021, will likewise apply to the SCJIPR 2022.

1) Introduction of the Simplified Process for Certain IP Claims

Suitability for the new simplified process

A dispute is generally suitable for the simplified process if the dispute involves an IP right, and:

- (a) the monetary relief claimed by each party in the action does not or is not likely to exceed \$500,000; or
- (b) all parties must agree to the application of the process.

Other considerations include whether a party can only afford to bring or defend the claim under the simplified process, the complexity of the issues and whether the estimated length of the trial is likely to exceed two days.

Service of claim documents

- If a Claimant wishes for the simplified process to apply, the Claimant must within two working days after acceptance by the Registry of the originating claim:

- (a) file and serve the relevant form to elect for this process.
- (b) file and serve the relevant form to abandon any claim for monetary relief in excess of \$500,000.

Defendant who makes a counterclaim must, within two working days after the filing of the defence and counterclaim, do **one** of the following if the Defendant wishes for the simplified process to apply:

- (a) file and serve the relevant form to abandon any claim for monetary relief in excess of \$500,000; or
- (b) inform the Court by letter that he agrees to the application of this process without abandoning any claim for monetary relief in excess of \$500,000.

- If a Defendant does not wish for the simplified process to apply, he must, within two working days after the filing of the defence (and counterclaim, if applicable):

- (a) (where there is no counterclaim) make an application for an order for the simplified process not to apply.
- (b) (where there is a counterclaim) inform the Court by letter that he disagrees to the application of this process and that he does not intend to file the form to abandon any claim for monetary relief in excess of \$500,000.

- The Court may also make an order on its own motion for the simplified process to apply (or not to apply, as the case may be) if it considers that the case is suitable (or not suitable, as the case may be) to be heard under the simplified process.

Active management at case conference



At a case conference, the Court must:

- (a) give directions on all matters necessary for the case to proceed expeditiously.
- (b) if practicable, give directions to ensure that the trial is completed within two days.
- (c) if practicable, give the directions at a single case conference.

Costs to be fixed and capped

- If the case is proceeding to trial, the Court must not make any order for costs until the trial is completed.
- The Court may order costs only in respect of certain items, with the ordered costs not exceeding the specified maximum amount.
- The total costs ordered against a party must not exceed the following amounts after any set off:
 - (a) \$50,000 in relation to the trial of the originating claim.
 - (b) \$25,000 in relation to any bifurcated assessment as to the amount of monetary relief.
- Some of these stipulations do not apply where costs are ordered against a party that has behaved unreasonably.
- The appellate court may, on its own motion or on the application of any party, make an order to limit the costs recoverable on an appeal even if a notice of appeal is not filed, as long as the application is not made more than 14 days after the notice of appeal is filed.

2) Consolidation of the Rules of Court Relating to IP Rights Under a Single Legislation

SCJIPR 2022 will also include the harmonisation of related provisions across the different IP rights such as the:

- (a) serving of documents on a registrant of a geographical indication (GI), a proprietor of a patent or registered trade mark, or a registered owner of a registered design at the address for service given in the relevant IP register.
- (b) filing of a notice of appeal within 28 days after the decision of the respective Registrar.
- (c) serving a copy of the notice of appeal on the Registrar and every other party within seven days after filing an appeal, and filing the applicable documents within 14 days after filing the appeal.
- (d) application to the Court must be made within one month after Registrar's decision to refer the cases.

i) Geographical Indications Act 2014

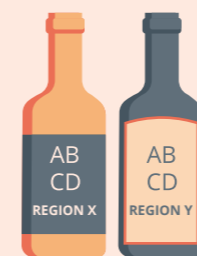
Actions for certain uses of GIs

- Commencement by originating claim.
- Service of defendant's pleadings:
- (a) defendant must serve on the Registrar a copy of a defendant's pleading within seven days after filing the pleading in Court.

Defendant may counterclaim for one or both of the following where GI is registered:

- (a) the cancellation of the registration of the GI.
- (b) the rectification of an error or omission in the register affecting the registration of the GI.

Applications for declarations relating to homonymous GIs



- Commenced by originating application.
- Applicant to consult with each defendant on the possibility of agreement:
 - (a) if an agreement is reached, the applicant must file in Court a copy of their agreement.
 - (b) if an agreement is not reached, each party must file with the Court a submission containing the party's proposal and the areas for which agreement could not be reached.
- The Court may declare the practical conditions on which the homonymous GIs are to be differentiated whether or not the practical conditions are those on which parties reached agreement.

ii) Patents Act 1994

Patent infringement proceedings

- Commenced by originating claim.
- Statement of claim must be accompanied by particulars of infringements relied on.
- Defendant must serve on the claimant particulars of the contract or licence relating to the patent if he alleges that such a contract or licence was in force.



Proceedings on validity of patents

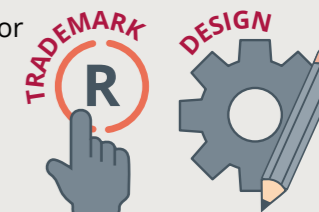
- If a claimant puts in issue the validity of a patent, he must serve particulars of his objections to the validity of the patent with his statement of claim.
- If a defendant puts in issue the validity of a patent, he must give prior notice of his intention to put in issue the patent's validity within 14 days after being served the statement of claim, and within 42 days to serve his defence or counterclaim and particulars of his objections to the validity.
- On the hearing of an originating application in which there are objections to the patent's validity, the Court must give directions relating to the service of the relevant particulars of any objections and the manner in which evidence must be given.



iii) Registered Designs Act 2000 and Trade Marks Act 1998

Registered design/trade mark infringement proceedings

- Commenced by originating claim.
- Defendant may dispute the validity of registration and/or counterclaim for the registration to be revoked/rectified or declared invalid.



International Consortium for Court Excellence Conference 2022



▲ Panellists at the ICCE Conference 2022

The International Consortium for Court Excellence (ICCE) Conference was held on 15 to 16 March. More than 1,600 judicial officers, court administrators, policy makers and experts from the related fields across 43 countries attended the virtual conference to explore how courts in Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and the Pacific Islands have embraced new modes of operations in the new endemic world, and addressed their implications on the court workforce, court management practices, and public trust and confidence.

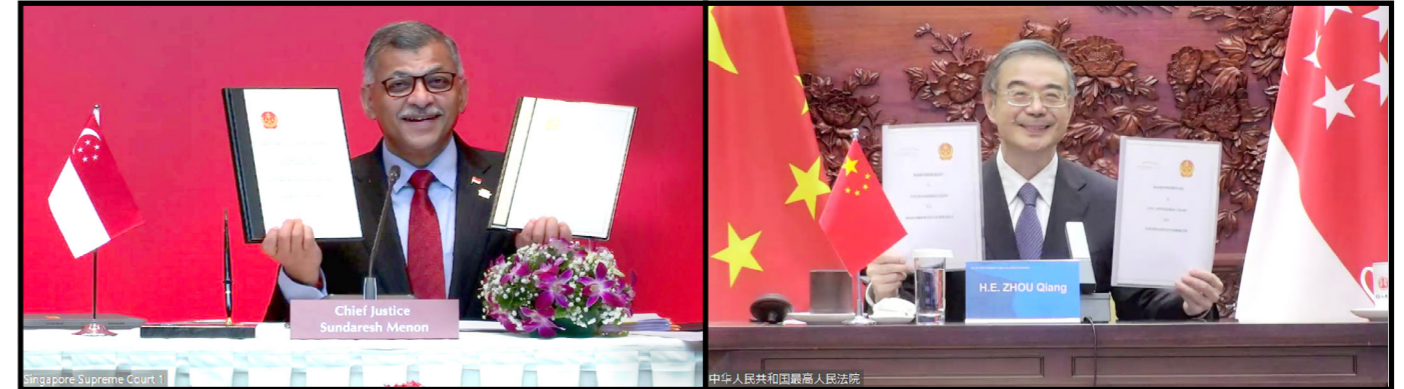
The conference, themed "Pursuing Court Excellence in Challenging Times" was organised by the Consortium members. It featured distinguished local and international speakers who shared the best practice in various areas to better help courts pursue excellence in challenging times. Following the keynote address by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, the discussions centred on four broad themes: "Meeting the Challenges of Court Workforce for Tomorrow"

(first session), "Embracing New Modes of Court Operations" (second session), "Change Management in a Highly Volatile and Uncertain Environment" (third session), "Harnessing Public Trust and Confidence in the Endemic World" (fourth session).

Deputy Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Ms Jennifer Marie led the first session as the moderator while Chief Executive, Ms Juthika Ramanathan represented the Supreme Court of Singapore as a speaker.

In his keynote address, Chief Justice Menon said: "Achieving court excellence is a long-term goal that we all subscribe to, and we should aggregate our knowledge and wisdom through resources like this so that it can be shared with our counterparts and preserved for our successors. This conference gives us an excellent opportunity to learn from each other's experiences in implementing the International Framework for Court Excellence and to further our journeys towards court excellence."

The Fifth Singapore – China Legal and Judicial Roundtable



▲ Chief Justice Menon of Singapore and Chief Justice Zhou of PRC holding up the signed MOU on Cooperation on Information on Foreign Law and MOU on Advancing Continuing Judicial Education

The fifth Singapore-China Legal and Judicial Roundtable (the Roundtable) was held on 3 December 2021. Since the Roundtable's inception in 2017, significant progress has been made in advancing judicial cooperation between the two Judiciaries. At the Roundtable, the Supreme Court of Singapore and the Supreme People's Court (SPC) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) inked two landmark Memoranda. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation on Information on Foreign Law was signed to establish a mechanism between the two courts to determine questions of law of each other's jurisdiction in international civil and commercial cases. This MOU is the first of its kind signed between the SPC and a foreign court. It is a testament to the commitment of the Supreme Court of Singapore and the SPC to strengthen bilateral cooperation in international civil and commercial cases.

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and the Chief Justice of the SPC of the PRC, His Excellency Zhou Qiang also

signed an MOU on Advancing Continuing Judicial Education. The MOU builds upon the foundation laid at the third Roundtable in 2019 to strengthen the strategic collaboration and partnership between the Singapore Judicial College and China's National Judges College.

The fifth Roundtable was hosted by SPC. Topics discussed covered a broad range of issues relating to commercial law, namely:

- Online Litigation Rules;
- Best Practices in Managing Intellectual Property Cases;
- Developing a New Paradigm for Dispute Management to Facilitate Infrastructure Projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); and
- Harmonisation of Commercial Laws for Application across the BRI.

The sixth Roundtable will be hosted by the Supreme Court of Singapore this year.

Judicial Cooperation with the Rwandan Judiciary



▲ Delegation from the two judiciaries participating in the forum (left photo collage) and meeting between the Chief Justices (right photo collage)

Since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for Judicial Cooperation and the Memorandum of Guidance as to the Enforcement of Money Judgments in April 2021, the Supreme Court of Singapore and Rwanda Judiciary have embarked on a series of collaborative activities that covered court technology, bilateral meetings between the two Judiciaries and a speech by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon on judicial leadership.

On 22 November 2021, more than 100 participants from both Judiciaries attended a virtual discussion forum on court technology, which was led by Justice Aedit Abdullah, Judge of the High Court and Judge-in-charge of transformation and innovation in the Singapore Judiciary, together with Justice Rukundakuvuga Regis, President of the Rwanda Court of Appeal. They exchanged knowledge and their experiences in the application

of technology to improve judicial efficiency and deliver effective and timely justice.

On 14 March, the Supreme Court of Singapore hosted a virtual bilateral meeting between Chief Justice Menon and Chief Justice Dr. Ntezilyayo Faustin of the Supreme Court of Rwanda. They exchanged experiences in their respective court's pursuit of judicial excellence, and expressed mutual commitment to expand the scope of judicial cooperation and deepen exchanges in areas such as court digitalisation, alternative dispute resolution and court excellence.

In tandem with the bilateral meeting, Chief Justice Menon delivered a lecture to the

participants comprising judges, senior officials, and judicial representatives from the two Judiciaries. Titled "Judicial Leadership: From Adjudication to the Administration of Justice", the lecture covered the elements that would fulfil the Singapore Judiciary's vision of being a leading, trusted Judiciary that is ready for tomorrow.



▲ Chief Justice Menon delivered a pre-recorded speech on judicial leadership after the bilateral meeting

[Scan the QR code for Chief Justice's speech](#)

Counselling and Psychological Services and Family Dispute Resolution Training for New FAM@FSCS

The Divorce Support Specialist Agencies (DSSAs) have been critical partners for the Family Justice Courts (FJC) in providing court-ordered supervised visitation and exchanges, counselling, group work and other psycho-education programmes for divorcing couples with children.

In late 2021, the DSSAs were consolidated by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) into five regional Strengthening Families Programme@Family Service Centre (FAM@FSC) agencies. Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and Judges from the Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) were invited by MSF to run an onboarding programme, to orientate new FAM@FSC mental health professionals for their court-related work.

The first onboarding was conducted on 19 October 2021. District Judge Kimberly Scully from the FDR covered topics such as understanding divorce court processes and policies, guidelines on court reports and CAPS Deputy Director, Mr Yeo Eng Kwan provided clinical insights and strategies for working with high conflict family cases. The session was attended by 40 participants from FAMS@FSC agencies, namely, Thye Hwa Kwan, Ang Mo Kio FSC, PPIs As-Salaam, Montfort, Fei Yue and HELP FSC. The training received positive responses and the participants indicated that the course provided a better understanding of the family court processes and management of the high conflict cases.

The second and third onboarding runs for new FAM@FSC professionals and agencies will be held in May and October respectively.

Judiciary Cares 2022

The Singapore Courts reach out to the less privileged members of society through the annual Judiciary Cares event. On 17 March, the three courts organised a superhero-themed Children's Literacy Carnival in support of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS). The virtual carnival was held over Zoom, with 79 participants from the Singapore Courts and beneficiaries from DAS comprising children aged seven to twelve. It served as a platform to support literacy development for dyslexic children and to raise awareness on dyslexia and the challenges faced by dyslexic children and their families.

The beneficiaries were split into groups of five or six, with each group assigned to a few gamemasters from the three Courts. The gamemasters ran various games to engage the beneficiaries' visual faculties, encourage them to form sentences using given words, and identify answers through written clues. To capture their interest, colourful slides were used as visual aids to conduct the games. The Singapore Courts also held a donation drive for DAS in March, to raise funds for dyslexic students from low-income families. A total of S\$11,510 was raised.

About Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS)

DAS is a social service agency that provides a wide array of services for individuals with dyslexia. DAS functions as a one-stop centre which provides support to over 3,500 primary and secondary students who are dyslexic through various programmes with 14 centres in Singapore.



▲ (From left) Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong and Executive Director of the Singapore Judicial College, Mr Paul Quan

Workshop on Familial and Partner Violence

In March, judges from the State Courts attended a workshop on Familial and Partner Violence.

It was organised by the Singapore Judicial College (SJC) in collaboration with PAVE, Singapore's leading organisation in providing and developing integrated services against interpersonal violence, as well as promoting healthy relationships in society.

Adopting a unique "knowledge-skills-experience" pedagogy, the participants were first equipped with foundational knowledge through pre-programme online modules. This was followed by a deep-dive with Dr Sudha Nair,

PAVE's Executive Director, who weaved in views gathered through the pre-programme surveys, and analysed emerging trends in familial and partner violence. The participants then attended skills-based coaching sessions with the PAVE team (Senior Deputy Director Ms Pang Kee Tai, Deputy Director Ms Soh Siew Fong with Dr Nair and PAVE social workers), SJC Faculty and judge mentors. These sessions featured role play scenarios based on actual cases to sensitise participants to tell-tale signs, so that they give pause for reflection when the participants encounter relationships in court tainted by abuse or violence. A candid conversation with the Presiding Judge of the State Courts Justice

Vincent Hoong capped off the programme. Justice Hoong shared broad judicial perspectives on the extent to which bench experiences can be deeply enriched by sociological insights on familial and partner violence that such cross-disciplinary programmes offer.

Previously, SJC also ran cross-disciplinary programmes on engaging Litigants-in-Person with personality disorders effectively, and on understanding the psychology of sexual assault victims. SJC collaborated with psychiatrists from the Institute of Mental Health and psychologists from the Ministry of Social and Family Development respectively.



Learning about Youth Justice System: Sharing with Singapore University of Social Sciences

The Family Justice Courts (FJC) were invited by Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) to conduct a learning session for their students on the youth justice system. On 19 March, District Judge Eugene Tay and Senior Court Family Specialist Gladys Tan conducted the virtual session to 33 students who are studying for their Graduate Diploma in Youth Work, Master in Psychology (Forensics) and Master in Social Work respectively. The students come from a diverse working experience in public, social service and youth agencies. This session was hosted by Head of Programme in Youth Work, SUSS, Mr Nicholas Gabriel Lim together with Associate Professor Timothy Leo Hee Sun.

The session aimed to provide the students with knowledge on youth justice in Singapore and insights on the types of cases managed by the Youth Court. It was a fruitful session where students had the opportunity to learn more about the Children and Young Persons Act, the various types of court proceedings in the Youth Court such as youth offender cases, applications for Care and Protection Orders and Family Guidance Orders, as well as the role of Counselling and Psychological Services' officers in court proceedings. The sharing platform also enabled exchanges on resources and services available for youth offenders with special needs in the community. There was consensus on the significant

role community partners play in rendering support to families and children to prevent them from entering the youth justice system. The session reiterated the importance of multi-disciplinary effort and the "many helping hands" approach to aid in the successful rehabilitation of youth offenders as well as supporting children and young persons in need of protection or guidance.

The session received positive feedback from the students who found the sharing to be informative and insightful. Youth justice remains an important area of work and such collaborations would strengthen the Youth Court's continuous involvement and outreach on the youth justice system in Singapore.

Lunar New Year Celebration with Yong-En Care Centre



Representatives from Yong-En Care Centre (left photo) with festive packs handed by State Courts volunteers (right photo)

Every year, the State Courts celebrate Lunar New Year with a charitable organisation to bring cheer to their beneficiaries during the festive period. On 15 February, staff volunteers organised a virtual programme of performances and games to celebrate the Lunar New Year with residents of the Yong-En Care Centre. The celebration was held over Zoom, with 45 residents from their Active Aging Hub branch.

Through video greetings, Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice Vincent Hoong highlighted how the State Courts were delighted to celebrate the festive occasion with them.

Deputy Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Ms Jennifer Marie reminisced on the meaningful

activities held previously with the residents, and they both extended their well-wishes to the residents.

The beneficiaries were then engaged in simple exercises and entertained with musical performances by the staff volunteers. They also participated in quizzes where they stood a chance to win NTUC vouchers.

A specially prepared festive pack containing cranberry cookies and mandarin oranges were distributed to the beneficiaries.

The State Courts also donated an additional 40 festive packs to the Dementia Day Care branch of the Yong-En Care Centre.

About the Yong-En Care Centre

The Yong-En Care Centre support the needs of the elderly, disadvantaged individuals, and families in Chinatown and beyond, serving more than 1,000 beneficiaries annually. They serve the community through their core services, namely Family Support Services, Home Care, Dementia Day Care and Active Ageing.

NOTABLE VISITS

20 Apr | Courtesy Call on Chief Justice by the High Commissioner of Malaysia to Singapore



His Excellency Dato' Dr. Azfar Mohamad Mustafar, High Commissioner of Malaysia to the Republic of Singapore, called on Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon on 20 April. They had a fruitful discussion and touched on a wide range of issues such as advancing judicial cooperation within the region and the impact of COVID-19 on the Judiciary.

(From left) High Commissioner Dato' Dr. Azfar Mohamad Mustafar and Chief Justice Menon

Technology Dialogues

Technology Dialogue sessions were held to carry out discussions on products that have been recently launched or being developed by the Courts. These sessions were jointly organised by the Law Society of Singapore and the Judiciary's Office of Transformation and Innovation (OTI). The Technology Dialogue sessions which were held in March saw about 200 attendees in total across both sessions. The audience included members of the legal profession, practising lawyers and support staff alike, as well as like-minded individuals in the legal technology scene in Singapore and around the region. These sessions can help gather feedback on the up-and-coming innovative products developed by the Courts and further improve and/or develop better products of such nature in the near future.

The Judiciary's Chief Transformation and Innovation Officer, Mr Tan Ken Hwee, moderated both sessions with the welcome and closing remarks delivered by the Law Society Vice Presidents Mr Jason Chan S.C. and Ms Lisa Sam.

Apart from sharing the new technology products and services introduced by the Judiciary, the audience were also invited to share their views, excitement, "wishlists", and feedback on the eLitigation system and other court technology issues. Audience participation was high, with insightful questions and an overall eagerness to get their hands on some of the yet-to-be-launched products developed by OTI.

For example, an informal poll with the attendees showed that, in light of recent phishing scams and incidents, about 86% of respondents informed that they were looking forward to being able to use Notify (Singpass) as a means of substituted service, in addition to existing "common" electronic means (e.g. WhatsApp, email, Facebook Messenger). The other highly anticipated product is the upcoming Document Signing Service (DSS), which will leverage on GovTech's "Sign with Singpass" and cryptographic technology to allow for secure digital signing of documents. Law firms can access DSS through eLitigation and arrange

for their clients to sign documents remotely using "Sign with Singpass".

The dialogues will likely continue to be held given the positive feedback received. OTI looks forward to further improving the Courts' technology products and services, and to share them with all court users, professionals and litigants alike.

Technology products introduced by the Judiciary



SG Courts Mobile App

A convenient way to access e-Lit case files from mobile devices.

Asynchronous Hearings

Allows parties to participate in the proceedings from different locations and at different times.



Document Signing Service

Allows affidavits to be witnessed and signed digitally by the deponent and the Commissioner.

Substituted Service

Allows for electronic substituted service to a defendant to be done over SingPass.



Smart(er) Bundles

A work-in-progress to create court bundles effortlessly.

FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS
SINGAPORE

STATE COURTS
SINGAPORE

SUPREMECOURT
SINGAPORE

SG
Courts

Follow Singapore Courts on Workplace

An additional platform to access the latest announcements and industry-related news.

Enable the notifications to receive the latest updates.

Scan the QR code to visit and follow the Singapore Courts' Workplace profile

Farewell to the Supreme Court Heritage Gallery

The Heritage Gallery on Level 1 of the Supreme Court will be making way for the construction of the new Supreme Court Service Hub. Launched in 2005, the gallery provided an introduction to the history of the Judiciary and Singapore's legal system, and housed artefacts from the former Supreme Court building. It also profiled the Judges who have served the Supreme Court over the years.

The artefacts will be relocated and displayed in other parts of the Supreme Court.

Scan the QR code to view the clip of the Heritage Gallery, extracted from the Supreme Court tour video

State Courts Recognised as National Service Advocate

On 23 March, the State Courts were awarded the National Service (NS) Advocate Award (Organisations) 2021 at the annual Total Defence Awards ceremony, held at Temasek Club.

The NS Advocate Award is the highest accolade conferred on businesses, organisations and

individuals in recognition of their exemplary support towards Total Defence and NS.

Principal District Judge Jill Tan received the award on behalf of the State Courts from Minister for Defence, Dr Ng Eng Hen.



Principal District Judge Jill Tan from the State Courts receiving the NS Advocate award from Minister for Defence, Dr Ng Eng Hen.



Behind the Scenes with Internal Audit Officers

Internal auditing helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. In this issue, we interviewed Tan Ling Ling and Tiffany Ng from the Singapore Courts' Internal Audit Division. Ling Ling joined the Supreme Court in 2015 and Tiffany joined the State Courts in 2019. Read on to find out more about the work they do.



Tan Ling Ling

Senior Assistant Director, Internal Audit Division



Tiffany Ng

Executive, Internal Audit Division

What are your responsibilities?

Ling Ling: My key role is to provide advice on improving internal control implementations for effective corporate governance practices. As an internal control systems implementation reviewer, I give suggestions on improvements to policies and procedures ranging from enterprise risk management, business continuity management, Information Technology controls and ensure government requirements have been carefully followed.

Tiffany: My role is to perform independent audits of State Courts' processes to evaluate whether the court's risk management, control and governance processes are adequate and working effectively to mitigate risks that might prevent State Courts from achieving its goals. Apart from these audits, I also take on ad-hoc consultancy projects from time to time upon requests from fellow colleagues or management.

What are some of the challenges that you face?

Tiffany: At times, I face resistance from the auditees. This could arise from a disagreement over a particular observation or the reluctance to release certain information. This could be resolved by keeping an open and honest two-way communication with auditees, as well as keeping a "no surprises" policy throughout the audit.

Other times, we might need multiple departments to coordinate or communicate to improve joint processes or come up with joint solutions. This requires me to take on a mediator role to encourage open communication and compromise.

Are there any misconceptions about the work you do?

Ling Ling: There is a misconception that Internal Auditors are fault-finders. We actually focus on

significant audit issues based on facts and data collected and provide recommendations. We not only spot issues, we also highlight good control practices observed during our audits in the report.

Tiffany: There is a common misconception that internal audit is the corporate "police function". On the contrary, we're an ally. We promote a culture where employees are encouraged to raise risk and control issues to us. For instance, when an employee proactively informs us that a particular procedure put in place to minimise risk (i.e. a control) is inadequate, we take it into consideration when performing our overall assessment. This culture in turn helps the organisation ensure that its controls are operating properly.

What are the critical qualities that an Internal Audit officer should have?

Ling Ling: Teamwork is key and we strive to work as a team with various stakeholders to improve processes.

The incumbent should possess an eye for detail, an inquisitive yet open mindset and good listening skills that will help in identifying the cause of problems. Being a good communicator will help with sharing findings that are factual and acceptable to process owners.

Tiffany: Some of the most critical qualities are integrity and a strong moral compass to maintain independence and objectivity. It is also important to have strong interpersonal and communication skills to build relationships and trust with auditees.

What are some valuable lessons that you have learnt?

Tiffany: As change is the only constant, the ability to change my mindset, learn and adapt on the job is crucial. Given everything that has happened the last couple of years, there is a need to be flexible, tune in to the organisation's transformational needs and always be ready to learn something new.

What keeps you going?

Ling Ling: Seeing our implemented recommendations resulting in better utilisation of resources is a form of testament on our successful value-added services. I am thankful for the support I received from my supervisor and the guidance received from the senior management.

Tiffany: At times, auditees inform me that my review of their processes has helped to strengthen internal controls and they see value in the work that we do. Sometimes they even acknowledge that they gain comfort over the institution of some controls and/or the improvement in efficiency of their processes. It's a very gratifying experience and always spurs me on to do better.

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