

# JUDICIARY TIMES

International  
Advisory Council  
Holds 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting

Chief Justice Menon  
co-chairs Inaugural  
Singapore-China  
Legal and Judicial  
Roundtable

Over 300  
Participants  
Attend Sentencing  
Conference 2017

## MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL





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# INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL HOLDS 2<sup>nd</sup> MEETING



The IAC members with High Court Justices and Family Justice Courts Judges

The International Advisory Council (IAC) held its second meeting from 29 to 30 August to continue the various streams of invigorating and exciting conversations on a range of important family law topics from the first meeting held on 28 September 2016.

Apart from IAC members, eminent local academics and Family Justice Courts (FJC) Judicial officers also presented papers at the meeting. The topics on the agenda included matrimonial property division, children's issues, complexities of international abduction and relocation, and research areas and future trends.

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon hosted a lunch on 29 August, which was attended by IAC members and Judges, as well as Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, then Minister for Social and Family Development, Ms Indranee Rajah, Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Law, Mr Chew Hock Yong, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social and Family Development, and co-chairs of the Family Law and Practice Committee. This further recognised the importance of continued collaboration between the courts and other stakeholders in the family justice eco-system.

Later that day, the Chief Justice—who is also chair of the IAC—held a working dinner with IAC members. There he outlined his vision for family justice and invited IAC members to share their views.

The IAC was established on 1 April 2016 to provide a platform for comparative learning in recognition of increasingly complex family issues and the rise

of globalisation that require multi-dimensional solutions. Global leading thinkers in the field of family justice, drawn from the common law and civil law jurisdictions, including judges, academics, and social science experts were therefore invited to join the IAC to discuss and share perspectives on developments in family law, practice, and justice; identify potential areas of research; and generate ideas and innovations that may be taken to situate the FJC at the forefront of family court practice.

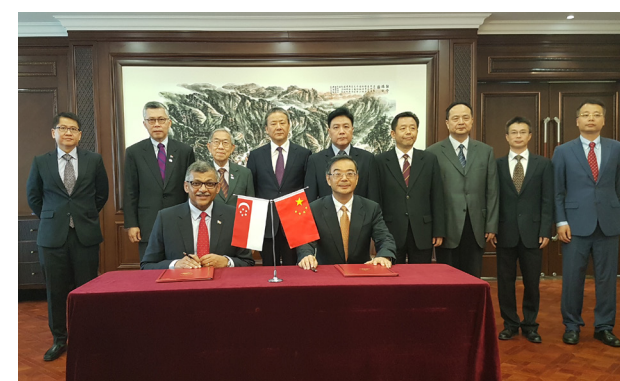
The eight IAC members are:

- Chief Justice Diana Bryant OA, Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia
- Justice Jacques Chamberland, Judge of the Court of Appeal, Quebec, Canada
- Emeritus Professor Dagmar Coester-Waltjen, University of Göttingen, Germany
- Justice Michael Hartmann, Non-Permanent Judge of the Court of Appeal, Hong Kong
- Sir Mathew Thorpe, former Judge of Appeal of the Court of Appeal, United Kingdom
- Professor Linda Silberman, New York University, USA
- Dr Robert Emery, University of Virginia, USA
- Dr Robin Deutsch, Center of Excellence for Children, Families and the Law at the William James College, USA.<sup>1</sup>



IAC meeting held at the Supreme Court

# CHIEF JUSTICE MENON CO- CHAIRS INAUGURAL SINGAPORE- CHINA LEGAL AND JUDICIAL ROUNDTABLE



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon co-chaired the inaugural Singapore-China Legal and Judicial Roundtable with President of the Supreme People's Court (SPC) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), His Excellency Zhou Qiang in Beijing on 21 August. The theme of the meeting was "Judicial Justice in the New Century".

In his opening address, Chief Justice Menon said: "The Roundtable signifies an important milestone in the growing relationship between (the) two judiciaries, enabling our judiciaries to promote and strengthen judicial exchange, deepen cooperation, learn from each other, and work together to tackle common challenges".

During the visit, Chief Justice Menon and Chief Justice Zhou reaffirmed the strong relationship between both courts and discussed ways to deepen pragmatic cooperation on judicial issues in an increasingly globalised and interconnected world, with growing numbers of transnational transactions. They also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on legal and judicial cooperation, further strengthening ties between the two courts.

The Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the PRC, His Excellency Cao Jianming also hosted a lunch for the Chief Justice. Both sides agreed that there had been close and effective legal cooperation between the judiciaries.

# STATE COURTS HOLD PUBLIC TALK ON RESOLVING EMPLOYMENT DISPUTES

In line with the establishment of the Employment Claims Tribunals (ECT) and the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management (TADM) on 1 April 2017, the focus of this year's public talk was on salary-related and other employment disputes.

Titled "What you need to know about resolving Employment Claim Disputes", the talk was held at the State Courts on 18 November 2017 and attended by about 130 members of the public comprising legal professionals, human resource practitioners, grassroots volunteers, and representatives from varied industries.

During the talk, speakers from the State Courts and TADM shared the various employment-related claims that can be referred to TADM and the ECT and the governing process, including how to enforce the tribunal orders.

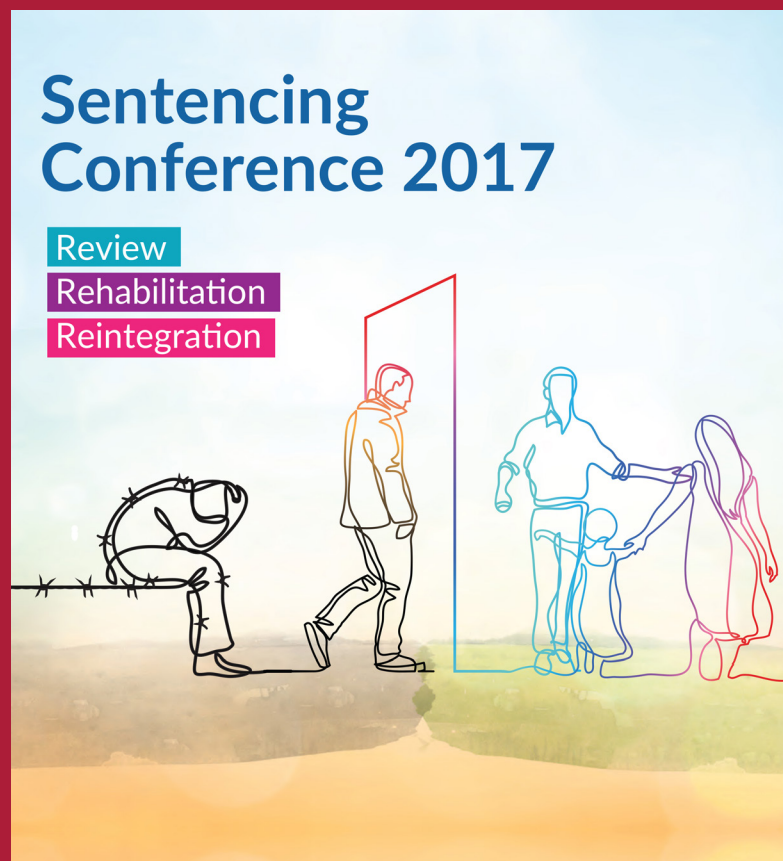
The annual public talk is part of the State Courts' public outreach efforts to educate the public and also to enhance access to justice.



<sup>1</sup> Dr Deutsch was appointed to the IAC on 1 April 2017.



# OVER 300 PARTICIPANTS ATTEND SENTENCING CONFERENCE 2017



Themed "Review, Rehabilitation and Reintegration", the Sentencing Conference covered 6 areas of interest.

- International Developments in Rehabilitative Sentencing Jurisprudence and Practice
- Probation and Community-Based Sentencing
- Incarceration – Changes and Convergence
- Psychiatric Conditions, Criminal Culpability and Sentencing
- Consistency in Sentencing
- Reintegration – The Hope Ahead

More than 300 members of the judicial and legal community, law enforcement agencies, and criminal justice system stakeholders attended the Sentencing Conference 2017 held on 26-27 October at the Supreme Court, an event jointly organised by the State Courts and the Singapore Academy of Law.

During the opening ceremony, the Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice See Kee Oon, introduced the theme of the Conference, which centred on three 'R's': "Review, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration".

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, delivered the opening Keynote Address on the development of rehabilitative justice in Singapore since its post-war era and the importance of the reintegration of offenders into society to achieve the goal of crime-prevention. He highlighted that rehabilitation, even for young offenders is "neither singular nor unyielding", but one of several sentencing considerations that include deterrence, prevention, incapacitation, and retribution.

A special lecture was delivered by The Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Vos, Chancellor of the High Court of England and Wales, titled "Perspectives on Open Justice: Anonymity and Confidentiality". In his lecture, he explored topics such as greater accessibility to the public through online justice, reliance on legal technology, and anonymity on the Internet.

Day 2 of the conference commenced with a Keynote Address delivered by Deputy Attorney-General Hri Kumar Nair SC on "The Prosecutor's Role as Guardian of the Public Interest in Sentencing".

The two-day conference featured six stimulating sessions presented by eminent speakers such as Justice Chan Seng Onn, Professor Arie Freiberg, and Mr Gregory Vijayendran, President of the Law Society. Participants were engaged in a series of illuminating dialogues chaired by moderators from the Singapore Judiciary, including Judge of Appeal Steven Chong.

In his closing remarks, Justice See stressed that an effective criminal justice system emphasises the certainty of enforcement and punishment, yet ensures that there is hope for ex-offenders to start afresh. He added that the role of the entire community, including the ex-offender himself, plays a crucial part to his reintegration.



## DISTRICT JUDGE KOH JIAYING REPRESENTS SINGAPORE JUDICIARY AT ICECJ



District Judge Koh Jiaying represented the Singapore Judiciary at the International Conference on Enforcement of Civil Judgment (ICECJ) with the theme "Sharing Experiences towards Best Practices" in an event organised by the Legal Execution Department, Ministry of Justice of Thailand from 7-9 June in Bangkok.

The conference focused on the "Enforcing Contracts" indicator of the World Bank's "Doing Business" Report. Singapore was ranked second for the indicator in the 2017 Report and first for the sub-indicator of "time required to enforce a contract through the courts".

DJ Koh shared Singapore's experience at two plenary sessions at the conference attended by delegates from ASEAN, China, Japan, Korea, Russia, the World Bank, as well as executives from the Ministry of Justice of Thailand.



# LAW FRATERNITY AND SUPREME COURT HONOUR JUSTICE CHAO AT VALEDICTORY REFERENCE

A Valedictory Reference was held on 27 September in honour of Justice Chao Hick Tin, a day before his retirement as a Judge of Appeal of the Supreme Court. About 500 members of the legal fraternity and the Supreme Court Bench, including the Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean and Justice Chao's family, graced the event. Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon led the chorus of tributes by legal luminaries including Minister for Law K. Shanmugam, former Minister for Law Professor S. Jayakumar, Attorney-General Lucien Wong, President of the Law Society, Mr Gregory Vijayendran, Registrar of the Supreme Court, Mr Vincent Hoong, and Judge of Appeal Andrew Phang.

A compendium of essays written in honour of Justice Chao Hick Tin entitled "A Judge for the Ages - Essays in Honour of Justice Chao Hick Tin" was launched after the Ceremony. The book pays tribute to Justice Chao's contributions to the Singapore legal system and jurisprudence. It also provides a glimpse into the intangible qualities which, together with his judicial scholarship and humanity, have made Justice Chao an extremely rare judge and a role model for all aspiring judges. The event concluded with a cake cutting ceremony to celebrate Justice Chao's 75th birthday.



"I congratulate Justice Chao in having completed a most remarkable five decades of distinguished public service in the law.... He is not only well respected for his legal mind and excellent judicial temperament, but he is also greatly admired and loved for his humility, kindness, and wisdom. He will be greatly missed on the Bench."

*Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon*

"Justice Chao, you will be remembered not just as a learned jurist or a consummate judge, but also as a genuinely wonderful person—a person of humility and grace, of wisdom and heart. On behalf of my fellow legal service officers, I wish you an active and happy retirement, and that you, Mrs Chao and your family will have many blessed years of happiness and good health to come."

*Mr Vincent Hoong  
Registrar, Supreme Court of Singapore*

"We wish you well for your retirement. You are respected greatly by the Bar, not only for being an outstanding jurist on our Supreme Court Bench, but also for never once letting your greatness make you lose touch with humanity."

*Mr Gregory Vijayendran  
President of the Law Society*

## MS SCHREVER HOLDS TALK ON JUDICIAL STRESS AND WELLNESS

Ms Carly Schrever, lawyer, provisional clinical psychologist, and researcher, delivered a lunch-time talk to Family Justice Courts Judicial Officers on 23 August. She spoke about work-related stress, and the psychology of stress including vicarious trauma, burnout, and compassion fatigue. She also shared the latest empirical literature on the topic. As judicial officers are uniquely placed at the crossfire of risk factors for work-related stress, she emphasised the importance of addressing judicial well-being as a community concern.



*Ms Schrever talking to the judges*



## DR DEUTSCH CONDUCTS 3-DAY TRAINING ON HIGH CONFLICT DYNAMICS IN DIVORCE



The participants with Dr Deutsch, front row in black dress

The Family Justice Courts (FJC) and the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) jointly invited Dr Robin Deutsch, a member of the International Advisory Council 2017, to provide an intensive three-day training from 6-8 September on high-conflict divorce matters. Dr Deutsch is the Director of Centre of Excellence for Children, Families and the Law at William James College, and an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School. 80 participants attended the training comprising of Judicial Officers and Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Counsellors from FJC, policy-makers from MSF, and Specialist Practitioners from the community providing intervention for high-conflict divorces, family violence, and child protection issues.

The training equipped participants with skills to understand high-conflict divorces, violence, and child resistance/refusal dynamics, make appropriate assessment and recommendations, and put in place various measures and orders that would manage the risks and conflict dynamics effectively. The training was well-received, and served as a good platform for FJC, MSF, and the Specialist Practitioners to network and enhance working relationships, increasing the collaboration essential for helping these families in need and for the best interest of the children.

## JUDICIAL OFFICERS ATTEND THE INAUGURAL RUN OF THE JUDICIAL MEDIATORS WORKSHOP



Singapore's Judicial Officers attended the Judicial Mediators Workshop organised by the State Courts Centre for Dispute Resolution (SCCDR) and the Singapore Judicial College (SJC) held at the Supreme Court from 12-13 October.

As part of SCCDR's specialised court-annexed Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) programme, the workshop aims to enrich the ADR eco-system and reinforce Singapore's status as a leading dispute resolution hub. The workshop is a State Courts' Workplan 2017 initiative designed to enhance mediators' skills and impart new ones necessary to conduct court-annexed mediation. Role-play sessions followed lectures to aid understanding through practical application.

In his welcome note, the Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice See Kee Oon, emphasised the need for a transition from Alternative Dispute Resolution to Appropriate Dispute Resolution, tailoring the State Courts' ADR processes to suit different types of disputes and the needs of the court users.

The trainers also shared insights on understanding disputants' mindset and a good mediator's traits, and how rapport-building and communication are essential elements of mediation. Throughout the workshop, SCCDR Judge trainers and coaches provided real-time feedback and guidance.

Participants also learned more about the drafting of Settlement Agreements and Judicial Mediators' Ethics. The Dean of SJC, Judicial Commissioner Foo Chee Hock and District Judge David Lim facilitated the reflections segment at the end of the event, and shared their experiences and expertise on combining different mediation styles in achieving a holistic solution.

## DR CARTER RETURNS TO PROVIDE PC TRAINING PROGRAMME

In September, the Law Society of Singapore and Family Justice Courts welcomed back Dr Debra Carter, a Parenting Coordination (PC) expert from Florida, who returned for the second time to conduct three days of basic PC training and another three days of intermediate/advanced PC training. Dr Carter conducted the first PC Training Programme in Singapore in early 2016.

A total of 37 lawyers and social science professionals attended the basic training programme, while 30 lawyers and social science professionals from the 2016 programme attended the intermediate/advanced PC training programme.

Dr Carter, a clinical and forensic psychologist, is a renowned PC practitioner. She explained the role of the PC, the PC process, the various intervention strategies, and the ethical challenges of an effective practice.

In small group discussions, participants worked on a case example given by Dr Carter where an eight year old kept wetting his bed at night, had terrifying nightmares because he was shuttling between two households, was exposed to the high octane conflict between his parents, and had behavioural problems in school that were far beyond the norm. Participants identified the type of PC intervention that would be most useful for the family and debated on how the parents could be helped to be more aware of the impact of their conflict on their child. Participants also role played the case example to practice their PC skills and apply the knowledge they acquired. The sessions were filled with laughter, while at the same time Dr Carter kept challenging the participants to continually work harder, think faster, and do better to help families.

In videos of PC sessions conducted by Dr Carter, her confidence and how she steered the parents to refocus on the best interest of their children were impressive and worthy of emulation. She had showed clearly how the PC process could be useful and beneficial for parents who were locked in high levels of hostility. Beyond her skills and knowledge, Dr Carter's unwavering dedication to helping terrified children caught in between their parents' war was evident in her teaching.

This training programme was the first time that lawyers and social science professionals came together in such a big way. Participants got to learn, network, and hear each other's perspectives and challenges. Participants completed the programme as changed people, full of new ideas and renewed sense of purposes to help families.

Parenting Coordination is an alternative dispute resolution process for parents who are having difficulties resolving their parenting disputes on their own and often need to come to court for a remedy. A Parenting Coordinator is appointed by the Court who utilises legal, mental health, mediation, education, and consultation skills and knowledge. The primary goal of a Parenting Coordinator is to assist the parents implement the parenting plan ordered by the court, and to help them co-parent better. During the process, parents are helped to lessen destructive behaviours. A successful outcome reduces parental conflict, encourages parents to resolve their issues without litigation, and minimises stress on their children.



The participants with Dr Carter



Dr Carter conducting the training



# SUPREME COURT WELCOMES 483 NEW ADVOCATES AND SOLICITORS



The legal community welcomed 483 new advocates and solicitors to the Singapore Bar at the Mass Call 2017 held over three sessions on 28 and 29 August. Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon presided over the first session, while Judges of Appeal Tay Yong Kwang and Steven Chong presided over the second and third sessions, respectively.

In his speech, the Chief Justice said that law firms should do more to help lawyers who might be struggling to cope with the volume and pace of their work. He also urged firms to prioritize in examining the safeguards they have regarding this. The Chief Justice added that young lawyers in particular are under increasing strain, citing findings from a recent

survey conducted in Britain which showed that more than 90 percent of the 200 lawyers interviewed said they felt too much emotional or mental pressure at work.

He also highlighted that one of the challenges young lawyers faced today was the search for meaning and purpose. He said, "such a goal is too thin and too anaemic to provide the moving force for a lifetime of committed labour". Instead, he hoped that the 483 newly appointed advocates and solicitors would find in their practice, "a devotion to something larger than themselves as that is the only way they would be able to keep themselves going over the long haul".

# SUPREME COURT ATTENDS ANNUAL DINNER WITH SENIOR COUNSEL FORUM



The Senior Counsel Forum hosted dinner for Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, Judges and Judicial Commissioners of the Supreme Court on 29 September. Held at Alma by Juan Amador, the dinner is organised annually to strengthen the ties between the Judiciary and the Senior Counsels.

# JUDICIARY CELEBRATES VOLUNTEERS AT THE ANNUAL APPRECIATION DINNER

The Judiciary Volunteers Appreciation Dinner was held on 14 September to recognise the contributions of our volunteers who play a significant role in making justice accessible to the public.

The annual event organised by the three Courts was hosted by The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon who shared how volunteer work matters at every stage of the legal process and expressed his deep appreciation for all volunteers who have generously given their time in service of a greater cause.

The annual outstanding volunteer awards were given out to five volunteers for their dedication to pro bono work. The awards given out include the Legal Assistance Scheme for Capital Offences (LASCO) Award which recognises volunteer lawyers for their dedication to pro bono criminal defence in capital offences at the Supreme Court, and the Outstanding Court Volunteer Award comprising three categories: Open Category, Advocate and Solicitor Category, and Student Category, which recognises volunteers in various vocations including mediation and court-user assistance at the State Courts and the Family Justice Courts (FJC).

Long Service Awards were also presented to two volunteers who have served for 10 years as Maintenance Mediators at the FJC.

The Mojocoustic band, formed by ex-offenders when they were with the Singapore Prison Service's Performing Arts Centre performed that evening. This event was made even more special for one band member who shared with the organisers how performing was his way of reintegrating himself into society. He shared how Chief Justice Menon spoke about the importance of dignity during a prison visit four years ago, and how his words had encouraged him.

This event was attended by over 300 Court volunteers and Judiciary staff, and is the second Judiciary Volunteers Appreciation Dinner jointly organised by the Supreme Court, State Courts, and FJC.



The award winners:	
Legal Assistance Scheme for Capital Offences (LASCO) Award, - conferred by the Supreme Court	Mr James Masih
Outstanding Court Volunteer Award (Open Category), - conferred by the State Courts	Mr Krishna s/o Veerappen
Outstanding Court Volunteer Award (Advocate & Solicitor Category), - conferred by the State Courts	Mr Lam Kuet Keng Steven John
Outstanding Court Volunteer Award (Advocate & Solicitor Category), - conferred by the Family Justice Courts	Mr Amolat Singh
Outstanding Court Volunteer Award (Student Category), - conferred by the State Courts	Mr Lim Sheng Kang Shaun

10-year Long Service Award:	
Ms Cheryl Lim Li Li	
Dr Yap Swee Cheng	





# THE 3 COURTS CELEBRATE 2017 JUDICIARY CARES WITH MINDS

On 6 December, Judges and Court Administrators from the Family Justice Courts, the State Courts and the Supreme Court accompanied some 90 beneficiaries from MINDS and their minders to Kidzania, Sentosa, for a fun filled day. The event was led by Justice Debbie Ong, Presiding Judge of the Family Justice Courts and Justice See Kee Oon, Presiding Judge of the State Courts.

Each year, the Judiciary Cares committee, comprising Judges and staff of the Family Justice Courts, State Courts and Supreme Court organises an activity to reach out to the needy and less privileged members of society. This year, the the courts sought to provide to provide the children in MINDS, an opportunity to have fun and interact with the larger community. The Courts also want to signal to caregivers that they are not alone and organisations like the Courts can play a part to support them to make a difference together.

Funds raised through staff donations were presented to presented to MINDS Chairman, Mr Huang Cheng Eng.

Close to \$32,000 was raised by the three courts. More than 100 Judges and staff of the judiciary volunteered at the event and accompanied the beneficiaries through the various role-play activities.

"MINDS is excited to collaborate with the three Courts as their CSR partner. It is awesome to have the team engage our students and clients in interactive and meaningful activities that equip them with Social and Community Living Skills. Such interaction will certainly promote social inclusion and greatly benefit their overall development. We are thankful for the dedication the three Courts have displayed in creating such a joyous event for MINDS. We look forward to having many more programmes that aim to infuse interactive co-learning platform."

Mr Huang Cheng Eng  
Chairman, MINDS



# SUPREME COURT HOSTS TRIPARTITE LUNCH



The Supreme Court hosted a Tripartite Lunch with members of the Bench, the Bar, and the Prosecution on 1 November.

Over 100 guests from the judiciary, the Attorney-General Chambers, and the Law Society of Singapore attended the event, hosted by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon. The Lunch provided a platform for networking and an engaging discussion between the Chief Justice and the various stakeholder groups.

# SUPREME COURT HOSTS LUNCH FOR SMU SCHOOL OF LAW



The Supreme Court hosted its first lunch for the Singapore Management University's (SMU) School of Law on 2 August. The event, attended by 35 guests from SMU and members of the Bench, provided an opportunity for both sides to exchange views on prevailing legal issues. The lunch with SMU will be a biannual affair where both the Supreme Court and SMU will take turns to host.

# COURTS DISTRIBUTE FOOD PACKS WITH FOOD FROM THE HEART



Courts staff with the packs ready to be distributed

Last year, Supreme Court and Family Justice Courts chose Food from the Heart (FFTH) as their adopted beneficiary during a staff poll conducted by the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee. FFTH is a non-profit organisation with food distribution programmes for underprivileged families and individuals.

The Courts' first collaboration with FFTH is the Food Packing and Distribution volunteering event on 4 September. A total of 38 staff members from both courts participated as volunteers. Prior to this event, the staff raised \$13,619 for the purchase of the food packs, with surplus donations going towards future events with FFTH.

Staff volunteers gathered at Teck Ghee Zone 'K' Residents' Committee at Ang Mo Kio at the end of the work day and started off with the food packing. The food pack for each household included food staples like rice, noodles, eggs, fruits, and canned food. After that, staff volunteers were divided into groups to distribute the food packs to the neighbouring HDB units. Though exhausted from the packing and distribution of food packs, it was definitely an enriching and meaningful experience for all staff volunteers.



## NOTABLE VISITS

## DEPUTY PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA VISITS THE SUPREME COURT



The Deputy Premier of South Australia, John Rau, who is also the Attorney-General and Minister overseeing several portfolios, paid a call on Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon on 6 September. They discussed topics related to court administration and the use of technology in court.

## LEADERSHIP IN COURT GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS VISIT THE STATE COURTS AND THE FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS



Senior Judges and Judicial officials from 22 countries visited the State Courts and the Family Justice Courts on 16 and 17 August respectively as part of the "Leadership in Court Governance" programme organised by the Singapore Judicial College from 14 to 18 August.

The 32 distinguished guests were introduced to the Criminal Justice Division by District Judge Toh Yung Cheong. They also learned about the International Framework for Court Excellence (IFCE) – the State Courts of Singapore Model from Principal Director of the Strategic Planning and Technology Division, District Judge Victor Yeo. Over at the Family Justice Courts, they were briefed on the Dispute Resolution Processes and Case Management Strategies by District Judge Kevin Ng.

## 4 JUDICIAL OFFICERS FROM MYANMAR JOIN SINGAPORE JUDICIARY'S ATTACHMENT PROGRAMME



Four judicial officers from the Supreme Court of the Union, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, were attached to the Supreme Court and the State Courts this year from 17 to 21 July and 23 to 30 October. They arrived in pairs, and were attached to the justice divisions, observing court and tribunal proceedings as part of the programme.

The attachments took place under the auspices of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Singapore-Myanmar Integrated Legal Exchange, and were supported by the Ministry of Law of Singapore.

## AUSTRALIAN DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY VISITS STATE COURTS TO LEARN ABOUT IFCE



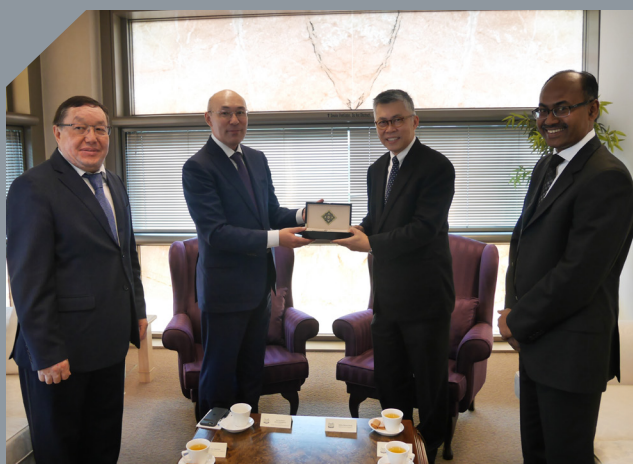
Director-General of Justice and Community Safety, Australian Capital Territory, Ms Alison Playford, visited the State Courts on 6 September to learn about the use and implementation of the International Framework for Court Excellence (IFCE). Deputy Presiding Judge and Registrar of the State Courts, Ms Jennifer Marie received Ms Playford, while Senior Director of the Strategic Planning and Technology Division, District Judge Seah Chi-Ling, spoke with her about the IFCE and the development of the IFCE State Courts of Singapore Model.

## MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF JAPAN VISITS SUPREME COURT OF SINGAPORE



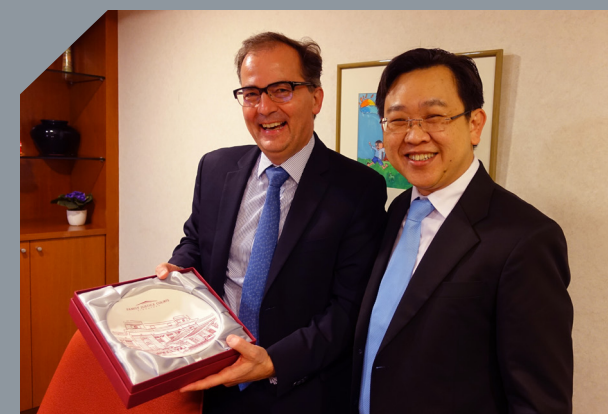
Her Excellency Yoko Kamikawa, Japan's Minister of Justice led a delegation to Singapore and paid a courtesy call on Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon on 12 September. Much was discussed at the call, including opportunities for collaboration.

## GOVERNOR OF ASTANA INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE VISITS THE SUPREME COURT



His Excellency Kairat Kelimbetov, Governor of Astana International Financial Centre, led a delegation of five to visit the Supreme Court on 15 September. He met with Justice Steven Chong and Justice Kannan Ramesh, and discussed issues relating to the establishment of a commercial court, as well as possible opportunities for collaboration. His Excellency Kelimbetov and his delegation were also given an introduction on the Singapore Judicial College and the Singapore International Commercial Court.

## HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW SECRETARY-GENERAL VISITS FJC



Secretary-General of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, Mr Christophe Bernasconi visited the Family Justice Courts on 24 October to learn more about the work of the family court. Deputy Presiding Judge Chia Wee Kiat hosted the Secretary-General.

Singapore is a party to three Hague Conference Conventions, namely, 1970 Convention on the Taking of Evidence Abroad, 1980 Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, and 2005 Choice of Court Convention.

## NOTABLE VISITS



## BEHIND THE SCENES WITH COURT COUNSELLOR AND PSYCHOLOGIST

The Counselling and Psychological Services, and the Community Court Secretariat are staffed by a multidisciplinary team of professional social workers, counsellors, and psychologists. They serve as the social science arm of the State Courts and Family Justice Courts and provide expertise on psychological and social issues that arise in the course of court proceedings.

Recognising that the Courts are not merely places of complex legal problems but also crucibles of complex human interactions, the two units provide an array of services to address the needs of the court users. They also work closely with the community to provide programmes to support families or individuals who require support on issues such as family violence, divorce, youth and children issues, and with certain criminal cases.



Gladys Tan  
Senior Court Counsellor



Samuel Chua  
Psychologist

### What are your responsibilities?

**Gladys:** My work encompasses servicing both Family Protection and Youth Court Cases.

I conduct risk and safety assessments, and collaborate with stakeholders to ensure litigants' safety and well-being. I also attend to litigants' enquiries and emotions while informing them on the Court procedures. At the same time, I seek to establish a common ground among litigants' interests without compromising anyone's safety and well-being through individual or joint sessions.

Within the Youth Court setting, I provide psychosocial inputs during Chambers discussion, facilitates Family Conferences to give families and professionals a platform to express their concerns and establish a mutual agreement on children's care plans.

**Samuel:** My main function is to provide clinical assessments of accused persons to evaluate their eligibility for certain court schemes, and develop treatment plans with the aim of helping to rehabilitate them into mainstream society.

### What is your typical workday like?

**Gladys:** My day consists of conducting risk, safety and preliminary mental health assessments while going through Court proceedings with the litigants. Nonetheless, changes are bound to occur given FJC's dynamic working environment; when there are crisis cases to attend to e.g. litigants verbalizing suicidal ideations or hyperventilating during sessions.

**Samuel:** When I receive a case referred by the Judge, I would conduct an assessment to see if there are any underlying issues which led to the person's criminal activity. This is done through a psychology method called motivational interviewing, in which I try to understand the person's background, remorse level, readiness for change, and thereby, his risk of reoffending.

### What challenges do you face?

**Gladys:** We encounter different profiles of litigants every day and the stance and strategy used to engage them has to suit them well. Sussing pertinent information is crucial as it helps to move the case forward but this can be emotionally and physically draining.

**Samuel:** I deal with people of different backgrounds, social and mental problems every day. It is important to be able to adapt and sieve through the information to arrive at a good assessment.

As a court psychologist, you will never know when your work has had a positive impact and ironically, that is usually a good thing because it suggests that the person has stayed out of the court system and successfully reclaimed his life in society.

### What keeps you going?

**Gladys:** The dynamic and fast-paced working environment!

**Samuel:** My passion to help others motivates me every day. Having a listening ear and sounding board in my colleagues who form a peer support system also contribute to why I enjoy my work.

### Any advice for people considering a career in this line of work?

**Gladys:** As what many social science professionals say, "Change is the Only Constant", the advice is to always be ready for changes and uncertainty.

**Samuel:** You must have the heart (a strong heart in fact!) and be prepared to go beyond your core work such as into the areas of social work and mediation as they form an essential combo to helping people.



## NEW GUIDEBOOKS FOR SELF-REPRESENTED PERSONS

With a view to enhancing access to justice, the Singapore Courts launched two new guidebooks for self-represented persons.

Developed as a State Courts Workplan 2017 initiative, the Guidebook for Accused-in-Person (AIP) provides a practical guide to navigating criminal proceedings in an easy-to-understand Q&A style. This guide will provide AIPs and their family members with essential information about criminal proceedings. The guidebook will be available at the State Courts and can be also obtained at [www.statecourts.gov.sg](http://www.statecourts.gov.sg).

Meanwhile, the User Guide on Rights and Responsibilities of Self Represented Parties in Civil

Proceedings will provide self-represented litigants a better understanding of how to conduct themselves and their cases in accordance with the law and court procedures in the High Court, State Courts or the Family Justice Courts. The guide outlines all the aspects of a civil proceeding from legal preparation, hearings/trials, conduct and decorum to the various schemes available. The User Guide will be distributed at Supreme Court, State Courts and Family Justice Courts. A soft copy of the user guide can also be found at [www.supremecourt.gov.sg](http://www.supremecourt.gov.sg), [www.statecourts.gov.sg](http://www.statecourts.gov.sg) and [www.familyjusticecourts.gov.sg](http://www.familyjusticecourts.gov.sg).

## UPCOMING EVENTS



State Courts Conversation 2020 (SC2020) is a multi-year project that was launched in 2017. The aim of the project is to engage both internal and external stakeholders to renew the State Courts' mission, vision, values, strategies and branding – a collaborative effort towards the future of the State Courts.

From June 2017 to September 2017, 25 internal dialogues were conducted. The first phase of this project engaged the State Courts' Judicial Officers and Court Administrators who shared their views and ideas for the future.

The next phase of the SC2020 project will begin in 2018 and will reach out to external stakeholders to learn more about their concerns, thoughts and expectations of the State Courts.

If you are a professional in the justice eco-system or someone who works closely with the State Courts, you may write to [contact@StateCourts.gov.sg](mailto:contact@StateCourts.gov.sg) and express your interest to be part of this project.





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