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Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with  
paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council  
resolution 5/1**

**Singapore**

The present report is a compilation of the information contained in the reports of treaty bodies, special procedures, including observations and comments by the State concerned, and other relevant official United Nations documents. It does not contain any opinions, views or suggestions on the part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), other than those contained in public reports issued by OHCHR. It follows the structure of the general guidelines adopted by the Human Rights Council. Information included herein has been systematically referenced in endnotes. The report has been prepared taking into consideration the four-year periodicity of the first cycle of the review. In the absence of recent information, the latest available reports and documents have been taken into consideration, unless they are outdated. Since this report only compiles information contained in official United Nations documents, lack of information or focus on specific issues may be due to non-ratification of a treaty and/or to a low level of interaction or cooperation with international human rights mechanisms.

## I. Background and framework

### A. Scope of international obligations<sup>1</sup>

<i>Universal human rights treaties<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations/reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>
CEDAW	5 Oct. 1995	Yes (arts. 2, 11(1), 16)	–
CRC	5 Oct. 1995	Yes (Reservation: general, arts 28(1)(a), 32)  Declaration (arts. 12,13,14,15,16,17,19, 37)	–
OP-CRC-AC	11 Dec. 2008	Binding declaration under art. 3: 16 years and 6 months	–

*Treaties to which Singapore is not a party: ICERD, ICESCR, OP-ICESCR<sup>3</sup>, ICCPR, ICCPR-OP 1, ICCPR-OP 2, OP-CEDAW, CAT, OP-CAT, OP-CRC-SC, ICRMW, CRPD, CRPD-OP, and CED.*

<i>Other main relevant international instruments</i>	<i>Ratification, accession or succession</i>
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide	Yes
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	No
Palermo Protocol <sup>4</sup>	No
Refugees and stateless persons <sup>5</sup>	No
Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Additional Protocols thereto <sup>6</sup>	Yes, except AP I and II
ILO fundamental conventions <sup>7</sup>	Yes, except Nos. 87 and 111 <sup>8</sup>
UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education	No

1. The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) noted that adherence to the seven major human rights instruments enhances the enjoyment by women of their fundamental rights and freedoms in all aspects of life. Therefore, it encouraged Singapore to consider ratifying the treaties to which it was not yet a party, namely the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.<sup>9</sup>

2. CEDAW also encouraged Singapore to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.<sup>10</sup> CEDAW commended Singapore on the withdrawal of its reservation, made upon ratification, with regard to article 9.<sup>11</sup> CEDAW reiterated its deep concern about Singapore's general reservations to articles 2 and 16 and its reservation to article 11, paragraph 1, of the Convention. CEDAW drew the attention of Singapore to the fact that it considered reservations to articles 2 and 16 to be contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention.<sup>12</sup> CEDAW urged Singapore to exert its efforts towards the withdrawal, within a concrete time frame, of its reservations to article 2, article 11, paragraph (1) and article 16 of the Convention.<sup>13</sup>

3. The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) regretted that Singapore maintained its declarations on articles 12 to 17, 19 and 37 and its reservations to articles 7, 9, 10, 22, 28 and 32, and recommended that Singapore withdraw these declarations and reservations.<sup>14</sup> CRC also recommended that Singapore ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography as well as the 1993 Hague Convention No. 33 on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption.<sup>15</sup> CRC further recommended that Singapore consider ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.<sup>16</sup> CRC welcomed the ratification of the 1973 ILO Convention (No. 138) concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment in 2005.<sup>17</sup>

4. CEDAW and CRC recommended that Singapore ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.<sup>18</sup>

## **B. Constitutional and legislative framework**

5. CEDAW was concerned that, although the Constitution guaranteed equality for all persons, it did not explicitly recognize equality on the basis of sex. Furthermore, there was no definition of discrimination against women, in accordance with article 1 of the Convention, in the national legislation, including the Women's Charter.<sup>19</sup> CEDAW encouraged Singapore to incorporate a definition of discrimination against women into its Constitution or other appropriate legislation, encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination, and provisions to prohibit discrimination against women, including on the grounds of marital status, age, disability and national origin.<sup>20</sup>

6. CEDAW noted that legislative reform proposals envisaged that marital rape would be recognized as a crime only in very narrowly defined circumstances.<sup>21</sup> CEDAW requested Singapore to enact legislation criminalizing marital rape.<sup>22</sup>

7. CEDAW urged Singapore to undertake a process of law reform to remove inconsistencies between civil law and sharia law, including by ensuring that any conflict of law with regard to women's rights to equality and non-discrimination was resolved in full compliance with the provisions of the Convention on equality in marriage and family relations.<sup>23</sup>

8. CRC welcomed amendments to several pieces of legislation in the area of child rights, including the Penal Code, and the Children and Young Persons Act, which contributed to the improvement of children's living conditions and development.<sup>24</sup> More specifically, CRC welcomed as positive development the criminalization of child sexual exploitation through the amendment of the Penal Code in 2007, and the amendment of article 122 of the Constitution in 2004, allowing children to acquire citizenship through their Singaporean mothers.<sup>25</sup> However, CRC noted with concern that in spite of recent legislative developments, the Convention had not yet been fully incorporated into domestic

legislation. CRC urged Singapore to ensure that all the principles and provisions of the Convention were fully incorporated into the domestic legal system.<sup>26</sup>

### C. Institutional and human rights infrastructure

9. As of December 2010, Singapore did not have a national human rights institution accredited by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC).<sup>27</sup>

10. CRC urged Singapore to establish an independent mechanism to regularly monitor fulfilment of the rights of children under the Convention, and to receive and independently investigate complaints on the violations of the rights of children. Such a body should be accessible to all children and be provided with the necessary human, financial and technical resources.<sup>28</sup> CRC welcomed the establishment of the National Family Council (NFC) in May 2008, and the establishment of the Central Youth Guidance Office (CYGO) and the Office of Public Guardian in 2010.<sup>29</sup>

11. CEDAW encouraged Singapore to elevate the status of the national machinery for the advancement of women, to strengthen its mandate and to provide the necessary human and financial resources to enable it to develop gender equality policies and monitor their implementation, and to act as catalyst for the effective use of the gender mainstreaming strategy across all ministries.<sup>30</sup>

### D. Policy measures

12. CRC noted as positive the development of various sectoral strategies concerning children. However, it was concerned that the strategies were rarely accompanied by concrete action plans for their implementation. CRC remained concerned that Singapore had not developed a comprehensive national plan of action on the implementation of the Convention. It recommended that Singapore harmonise its various strategies on children and families under a comprehensive national plan of action for children. The national plan should be rights-based and cover all principles and provisions of the Convention. It should be linked to national development plans, strategies and budgets and should contain specific time-bound and measurable goals and targets to effectively measure progress in the enjoyment of all rights by all children.<sup>31</sup>

## II. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

### A. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms

#### 1. Cooperation with treaty bodies

<i>Treaty body<sup>32</sup></i>	<i>Latest report submitted and considered</i>	<i>Latest concluding observations</i>	<i>Follow-up response</i>	<i>Reporting status</i>
CEDAW	2004	August 2007		Fourth report due and submitted in 2009, scheduled to be examined in 2011
CRC	2009	January 2011	–	Combined fourth and fifth reports due in 2017

<i>Treaty body<sup>32</sup></i>	<i>Latest report submitted and considered</i>	<i>Latest concluding observations</i>	<i>Follow-up response</i>	<i>Reporting status</i>
OP-CRC-AC			–	Initial report overdue since 2009

## 2. Cooperation with special procedures

<i>Standing invitation issued</i>	No
<i>Latest visits or mission reports</i>	Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (21–28 April 2010): report to be presented during the 17th session of the Human Rights Council in June 2011
<i>Visits agreed upon in principle</i>	
<i>Visits requested and not yet agreed upon</i>	Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (2006)
<i>Facilitation/cooperation during missions</i>	The Special Rapporteur expressed his sincere gratitude for the full cooperation and openness of the Government of Singapore in the preparation and conduct of his visit from 21 to 28 April 2010. <sup>33</sup>
<i>Follow-up to visits</i>	
<i>Responses to letters of allegations and urgent appeals</i>	During the period under review, 2 communications were sent. The Government replied to both communications.
<i>Responses to questionnaires on thematic issues</i>	Singapore responded to 10 of the 26 questionnaires sent by special procedures mandate holders. <sup>34</sup>

## B. Implementation of international human rights obligations

### 1. Equality and non-discrimination

13. CEDAW expressed concern about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men within the family and society at large. Such stereotypes presented a significant obstacle to the implementation of the Convention, were a root cause of violence against women in the private and public spheres, placed women in a disadvantaged position, including in the labour market, and limited their access to leadership positions in political and public life.<sup>35</sup>

14. CEDAW recommended that Singapore take measures to bring about a change in attitudes with a view to eliminating stereotypes associated with traditional gender roles in the family and in society. It recommended that Singapore expand its current awareness-

raising efforts and training activities to leaders of political parties and senior managers in the private sector. CEDAW called upon Singapore to ensure that measures to enhance a work/life balance were targeted at both women and men, so as to further support the equal sharing of family and work responsibilities.<sup>36</sup> CEDAW encouraged Singapore to work towards the practical realization of the principle of equality between women and men, as required under article 2 of the Convention, and not solely towards achievement of equality of opportunities.<sup>37</sup>

15. CEDAW was concerned that women continued to be underrepresented at senior levels within the public administration, including the diplomatic service, judiciary and educational institutions, as well as the private sector, and that there were no women ministers in the Cabinet. While noting the progress made with regard to the representation of women in Parliament, CEDAW was concerned that the proportion of women parliamentarians was also still low.<sup>38</sup>

16. Following a visit to Singapore in April 2010, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance noted that the Government was acutely aware of the threats posed by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. In this regard, the authorities had endeavoured to put in place laws, policies and institutions that seek to combat these scourges, and to promote social cohesion, tolerance, understanding and respect among the diverse ethnic and religious groups living in Singapore.<sup>39</sup>

17. The Special Rapporteur nonetheless raised various issues of concern relating to certain blind spots in the policies and measures pursued by the Government in its quest for racial harmony. These included restrictions on public debate and discourse on the issue of ethnicity, and the importance of ethnic identity in daily life. Several policies had further marginalized certain ethnic groups. The situation needed to be acknowledged and addressed in order to safeguard the stability, sustainability and prosperity of Singapore. The Special Rapporteur stressed the need for a robust and solid legal and institutional framework to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.<sup>40</sup>

18. CRC reiterated its concern that the principle of non-discrimination was restricted to citizens and did not apply to all children within Singapore's jurisdiction, irrespective of the status of their parents, in accordance with article 2 of the Convention. Furthermore, CRC was concerned about reports that discrimination against girls, children with disabilities and non-residents still persisted. CRC urged Singapore to revise its legislation to respect and ensure the rights set forth in the Convention to all children, in particular girls, children with disabilities and children of foreign origin, without discrimination of any kind; and to adopt a comprehensive strategy addressing all forms of discrimination, including multiple forms of discrimination against all groups of children in vulnerable situations, and to combat discriminatory societal attitudes.<sup>41</sup>

19. While welcoming the April 2004 amendment to the Constitution which allows children to acquire citizenship by descent from their mothers, CRC noted with concern that the amended law was applied only to children born after 2004. CRC was concerned that there were still many stateless children and that, under specific circumstances, children could be deprived of their citizenship under article 129(2)(a) or 134(1)(a) of the Constitution. CRC recommended that Singapore revise its nationality law with a view to preventing children from being deprived of their citizenship, and to consider granting citizenship to all children of Singaporean mothers born before 2004.<sup>42</sup> CEDAW requested Singapore to provide foreign wives with work permits and to develop a system whereby foreign wives would be granted citizenship within a clear and reasonable timeframe, instead of considering citizenship applications on a case by case basis.<sup>43</sup>

## 2. Right to life, liberty and security of the person

20. A thematic report of the Secretary-General on the application of the death penalty indicated that the death penalty was still applied in Singapore, but noted that the number of executions had dropped significantly in recent years (22 in the period 2004–2008).<sup>44</sup> In 2007, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions transmitted to the Government of Singapore two urgent appeals relating to cases in which the death penalty had been imposed on the basis of mandatory sentencing provisions. In its response, Singapore noted that the death penalty in Singapore was provided for as part of the judicial process, that its imposition was neither summary nor arbitrary, and therefore, in its view, it did not fall within the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.<sup>45</sup>

21. CEDAW was concerned about the situation of foreign wives of Singaporean citizens with regard to violence and abuse.<sup>46</sup> CEDAW called upon Singapore to provide foreign wives of Singaporean citizens with prompt access to information and shelter, in cases of abuse and violence, for the time period required.<sup>47</sup>

22. While noting the education programmes and guidelines on restricting and discouraging the use of corporal punishment, CRC reiterated its concern that corporal punishment, including caning, was still considered a lawful form of discipline in the family, schools and institutions. CRC recommended that the State party prohibit all forms of corporal punishment, continue to systematically train teachers and personnel working in institutions and youth detention centres on non-violent forms of discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment, continue to sensitize and educate parents, guardians and professionals working with children on the harmful effects of corporal punishment, with a view to changing the general attitude towards this practice, and promote non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment.<sup>48</sup>

23. CEDAW was concerned at the narrow definition of trafficking in persons employed by Singapore. It was further concerned that women and girls who had been trafficked could be punished for violation of immigration laws and be treated as offenders rather than victims.<sup>49</sup> It encouraged Singapore to review its current legal and policy measures in the light of the definition of trafficking contained in the Palermo Protocol, with a view to improving the identification of victims and the prosecution of perpetrators. CEDAW urged Singapore to ensure that women and girls who are victims of trafficking are not punished for violation of immigration laws, and are provided with adequate support in order to testify against their traffickers, and have access to adequate assistance and remedies.<sup>50</sup>

24. In 2010, the ILO Committee of Experts emphasized that the provisions of the Destitute Persons Act of 1989 which stipulated that destitute persons could be required, subject to personal sanctions, to reside in a welfare home and to engage in work, fell under the definition of “forced or compulsory labour” under article 2(1) of the Forced Labour Convention (No. 29). The Committee of Experts expressed hope that the Act would be amended so as to clearly state that any work in a welfare home is performed voluntarily, so as to bring the Act into conformity with the Convention.<sup>51</sup>

25. In 2010, the Committee of Experts, with reference to the Children and Young Persons Act and the Penal Code of Singapore, stated that provisions therein did not cover the full range of prohibitions contemplated in Article 3(b) of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182), namely, the use, procuring or offering of a child under 18 years for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances. The Committee of Experts urged Singapore to take the necessary measures to bring the legislation into conformity with this article in the Convention.<sup>52</sup>

26. The ILO Committee of Experts further noted that, according to section 6 of the Children and Young Persons Act, a person who caused or procured a person under 16 years

of age to be in any street, premises or place for the purpose of begging or carrying out illegal activities such as gambling or other activities detrimental to the health or welfare of the child, committed an offence. The Committee of Experts noted that, by virtue of article 3(c) of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, constituted one of the worst forms of child labour and was therefore prohibited for children below 18 years of age. The Committee of Experts requested Singapore to take the necessary measures to extend the prohibition in the Act to all persons under 18 years.<sup>53</sup>

### **3. Administration of justice and the rule of law**

27. UNESCO stated that the independence and credibility of the judiciary, which had been questioned in connection with the outcomes of defamation cases involving the government and members of the opposition party, needed to be reaffirmed. Mechanisms like the doctrine of contempt of court needed to be exercised judiciously and should not be used to regulate the right of free, fair and reasonable criticism of the judiciary and judicial decisions.<sup>54</sup>

28. While noting with appreciation the existence of a separate juvenile justice system in the State party and welcoming, in particular, the establishment of the Children Care Court in May 2008, and the introduction of the dedicated court process, CHILD (Children's Best Interests, Less Adversarial), in July 2008, CRC remained concerned that the minimum age of criminal responsibility remained very low at 7 years, that corporal punishment and solitary confinement were still used to discipline juvenile offenders, and that many offences were punishable by caning for males between the ages of 7 and 16 years. CRC was also concerned that persons convicted of an offence committed under the age of 18 may be sentenced to life imprisonment; and that children between 16 and 18 years of age continued to be tried in adult courts. CRC recommended that Singapore continue to strengthen its efforts to ensure the full implementation of juvenile justice standards, and in particular that it urgently raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility that it prohibit the use of corporal punishment and solitary confinement for juvenile offenders, that deprivation of liberty only be applied as a measure of last resort; that the sentence of life imprisonment not be applied to children under the age of 18; and that the special protection provided for under the Children and Young Persons Act be extended to children between 16 and 18 years of age.<sup>55</sup>

### **4. Right to privacy, marriage and family life**

29. CEDAW was concerned about the situation of foreign domestic workers, including the requirement of regular pregnancy testing and the prohibition from marrying nationals of Singapore.<sup>56</sup>

30. CRC expressed concern at the handling of the Children Beyond Parental Control system, under which parents can file a formal complaint with the Children Care Court and children between 8 to 16 years of age can be placed in institutions, sometimes in the same institutions as juvenile delinquents. CRC recommended that Singapore review its policies on Children Beyond Parental Control with a view to ensuring that the institutionalisation of children be used as a measure of last resort and only under appropriate judicial oversight, undertake a study on the efficacy of the present system and its impact on children, and provide counselling, parental skills training and appropriate therapy, as needed, as the first priority.<sup>57</sup>

31. While welcoming the proposed legislation to raise the minimum age of marriage for Muslim women to 18 years, CEDAW was concerned about the existence of the dual legal system of civil law and sharia law with regard to personal status, which resulted in

continued discrimination against Muslim women in the fields of marriage, divorce and inheritance.<sup>58</sup>

32. CEDAW called upon Singapore to ensure that paid family, maternity and paternity leave is guaranteed to all employees in the public and private sectors, so as to ensure the equal sharing of family and work responsibilities between women and men.<sup>59</sup>

## **5. Freedom of movement**

33. With regard to the situation of migrant workers, CEDAW expressed concern that the security bond to be deposited by employers often resulted in a restriction on the freedom of movement of foreign domestic workers. CEDAW requested that Singapore raise the awareness of employers of foreign domestic workers with regard to the purpose of the security bond so that they do not limit foreign domestic workers' freedom of movement.<sup>60</sup>

## **6. Freedom of religion or belief, expression, association and peaceful assembly, and right to participate in public and political life**

34. UNESCO stated that the media were heavily regulated by the Government through direct and indirect political, legal and structural systems of control and that the country had heavily concentrated media, with two umbrella companies owning all the daily newspapers, television and radio channels. Though officially operating as publicly-listed companies, the companies are linked to the Government and maintain a pro-Government stance. In addition to laws that directly interfered with freedom of expression, there were also other forms of control, including the extensive use of defamation charges. It was also noted that many editors and senior journalists of the mainstream English daily newspaper had held important positions in the Government, run by the ruling political party. Such systems of control result in media that do not encourage a diversity of ideas. The absence of a vibrant public sphere in Singapore was a cause of concern.<sup>61</sup> The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance expressed concern at restrictions on public debate and discourse on the issue of ethnicity and the importance of ethnic identity in daily life.<sup>62</sup>

35. UNESCO also indicated that Singapore was yet to witness internationally recommended media accountability systems like code of ethics for journalists or a press council. Editors of mainstream dailies have not been receptive to the idea of an ombudsperson, an issue that had been raised in the past by varied stakeholders.<sup>63</sup>

36. UNESCO stated that statutory and democratic reforms would be a first step towards creating an environment in which the mainstream media could be accountable to the people. This should include the amendment of restrictive laws like the Newspaper Printing Presses Act (NPPA) and the Internal Security Act (ISA). Licensing requirements for newspaper, radio and television also needed to be reviewed in order to make the mainstream media credible.<sup>64</sup>

37. CEDAW encouraged Singapore to intensify its efforts towards strengthening women's representation in leadership roles, including elected and appointed positions, in the Cabinet, Parliament, public administration and judiciary. CEDAW recommended that Singapore strengthen its nomination, selection and promotion procedures with temporary special measures so as to accelerate the achievement of full and equal participation of women in political and public life and decision-making at all levels.<sup>65</sup>

## **7. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work**

38. CEDAW called upon Singapore to review the legal protection afforded to foreign women domestic workers under the Employment of Foreign Workers Act, and to ensure that such workers benefited from wider protection, either under the Employment Act or

under separate legislation on foreign domestic workers, especially with regard to their contractual status. It also recommended that the Government, rather than private associations, directly supervise compliance by employment agencies and employers. It further recommended that foreign domestic workers be entitled to adequate wages and decent working conditions, including a day off, benefits such as medical insurance, and access to complaint and redress mechanisms.<sup>66</sup>

39. While noting that Singapore had amended the Employment Act in 2004 and raised the minimum age of employment from 12 to 13 years, CRC was concerned that the minimum age of employment was still lower than the age of compulsory schooling. CRC recommended that CRC strengthen its efforts to prevent all children within its jurisdiction from being economically exploited and that it raise the minimum age of employment with a view to harmonizing it with the age for the end of compulsory schooling (15 years).<sup>67</sup>

40. In 2010, the ILO Committee of Experts requested Singapore to provide information on measures taken or envisaged to ensure conformity with article 9(3) of the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138), which provides for national regulations obliging employers to keep registers or other duly certified documents containing the name and age, or date of birth, of employees who are under 18 years of age.<sup>68</sup>

41. CEDAW was concerned that the Employment Act did not cover foreign domestic workers, and that the Employment of Foreign Workers Act dealt mainly with the issue of work permits rather than providing the necessary protection of the rights of foreign domestic workers.<sup>69</sup>

42. CEDAW remained concerned about the ongoing vertical and horizontal occupational segregation, the persistent wage gap between women and men, and the lack of a legal definition and prohibition of sexual harassment.<sup>70</sup> CEDAW urged Singapore to withdraw its reservation to article 11, paragraph 1, and to adopt effective measures to eliminate occupational segregation. CEDAW requested Singapore to ensure that women in managerial and executive positions who were not covered by the Employment Act were guaranteed the full legal maternity leave protection, both in the public and private sectors. CEDAW called upon Singapore to adopt legislation guaranteeing equal pay for work of equal value so as to narrow and close the wage gap between women and men. CEDAW also encouraged Singapore to take steps to enact legislative provisions on sexual harassment in the workplace and in educational institutions, with provisions for sanctions, civil remedies and compensation for victims.<sup>71</sup>

## **8. Right to social security and to an adequate standard of living**

43. CRC noted with appreciation the excellent level of health indicators for children and the wide availability of high-quality health-care services. CRC recommended among others that Singapore strengthen its programme to promote healthy adolescent lifestyles, and that it adopt a comprehensive policy on adolescent health, including reproductive health.<sup>72</sup>

## **9. Right to education and to participate in the cultural life of the community**

44. CRC was concerned that not all children were covered by the Compulsory Education Act or had access to free primary school. CRC was also concerned that the highly competitive nature of the education system risked hampering the development of children to their fullest potential. CRC recommended that Singapore extend the Compulsory Education Act to include all children, including non-citizens, ensure that all children have access to free primary education, review its school and academic system to reduce school-related stress and high competitiveness, strengthen and accelerate efforts to support Malay students in their academic development, and strengthen efforts to include human rights education in the official curriculum at all levels of education.<sup>73</sup>

45. CRC noted that the authorities provide funding and training to the Special Education Schools for children with disabilities, but was concerned that the Special Education Schools are run by voluntary welfare organisations and do not come under the purview of the authorities. CRC remained concerned that children with disabilities were still not fully integrated into the education system and that there was still a lack of quantitative and qualitative data on children with disabilities and their needs. CRC recommended, among others, that Singapore extend the Compulsory Education Act (2003) to include all children with disabilities, provide inclusive education to children with special needs, provide training from a child rights perspective for professional staff working with children with disabilities, such as teachers, social workers and medical, paramedical and related personnel, allocate more resources to ensure that children with disabilities have timely access to early intervention services and integration within mainstream schools, and strengthen support to families with children with disabilities.<sup>74</sup>

#### **10. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers**

46. In 2006, UNFPA stated that, in Singapore, one in every seven households employed a live-in migrant worker. UNFPA noted that immigration policies prohibited the marriage of foreign domestic workers to citizens. Female domestic workers were also obliged to undergo medical examinations every six months, including pregnancy and HIV tests, whereas other foreign workers were required to do so once every two years. Those who were pregnant often faced dismissal and deportation.<sup>75</sup>

47. UNFPA also noted that several recruitment agencies were found to be negligent when abused domestic workers turned to them for assistance.<sup>76</sup> In this regard, it indicated that Singapore was developing an accreditation system to regulate recruitment agencies. It further observed that Singapore had raised the legal age for domestic workers to 23, established an obligatory orientation programme for domestic workers and employers, and provided a telephone information service that instructed workers of their rights and procedures for changing employers.<sup>77</sup>

### **III. Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints**

48. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance acknowledged that the peaceful coexistence of the diverse communities in Singapore was a remarkable achievement in itself. He noted that Singapore was rightly proud of its richly diverse society, where individuals from a wide range of backgrounds manage to cohabit and interact with each other on a small portion of territory. At the same time, the Special Rapporteur observed that certain ethnic groups remained marginalized.<sup>78</sup>

49. CEDAW welcomed the various efforts made by Singapore to combat domestic violence, including through the establishment of a Family Violence Dialogue Group, which brings together representatives from different ministries, courts, prisons, social services and women's organizations. CEDAW also commended Singapore for the introduction of counselling orders which provide for mandatory counselling for perpetrators and victims.<sup>79</sup>

### **IV. Key national priorities, initiatives and commitments**

N/A

## V. Capacity-building and technical assistance

50. Concerning follow-up to the United Nations Study on violence against children, CRC recommended that Singapore co-operate with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children, and seek assistance from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), World Health Organization (WHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as well as NGO partners.<sup>80</sup>

51. With regard to its observations on the administration of juvenile justice, CRC recommended that Singapore make use of the technical assistance tools developed by the United Nations Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice and its members, which include UNODC, UNICEF, OHCHR and NGOs, and seek technical advice and assistance, as needed, from the members of the Panel.<sup>81</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, the status of ratifications of instruments listed in the table may be found in *Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General: Status as at 1 April 2009* (ST/LEG/SER.E/26), supplemented by the official website of the United Nations Treaty Collection database, Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, <http://treaties.un.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> The following abbreviations have been used for this document:

ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
OP-ICESCR	Optional Protocol to ICESCR
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICCPR-OP 1	Optional Protocol to ICCPR
ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to CEDAW
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
OP-CRC-AC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict
OP-CRC-SC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
OP-CRPD	Optional Protocol to CRPD
CED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

<sup>3</sup> Adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/117 of 10 December 2008. Article 17, paragraph 1, of OP-ICESCR states that "The present Protocol is open for signature by any State that has signed, ratified or acceded to the Covenant".

<sup>4</sup> Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

<sup>5</sup> 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, 1954 Convention relating to the status of Stateless Persons and 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

<sup>6</sup> Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (First Convention); Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of

Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea (Second Convention); Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (Third Convention); Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Convention); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III). For the official status of ratifications, see Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, at [www.eda.admin.ch/eda/fr/home/topics/intla/intrea/chdep/warvic.html](http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/fr/home/topics/intla/intrea/chdep/warvic.html).

- <sup>7</sup> International Labour Organization Convention No. 29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour; Convention No. 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour, Convention No. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise; Convention No. 98 concerning the Application of the Principles of the Right to Organise and to Bargain Collectively; Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value; Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation; Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment; Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.
- <sup>8</sup> ILO Convention No. 105 was subsequently denounced by Singapore.
- <sup>9</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 36.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 33.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 5.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 11.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 12.
- <sup>14</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, paras. 6 and 7.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 49(c).
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 53(g).
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 3(g).
- <sup>18</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 22; CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, para. 67(f).
- <sup>19</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 13.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 14.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 27.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 28.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 16.
- <sup>24</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, paras. 8 and 9.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 3(a)(b).
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 8 and 9.
- <sup>27</sup> For the list of national human rights institutions with accreditation status granted by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC), see A/65/340, annex I.
- <sup>28</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, paras. 14 and 15.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 3(c) and (d).
- <sup>30</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, paras. 17 and 18.
- <sup>31</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, paras. 12 and 13.
- <sup>32</sup> The following abbreviations have been used for this document:
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| CEDAW | Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women |
| CRC   | Committee on the Rights of the Child.                        |
- <sup>33</sup> See OHCHR press release of 28 April 2010.
- <sup>34</sup> The questionnaires referred to are those reflected in an official report by a special procedure mandate holder issued between 1 January 2006 and 31 October 2010. Responses counted for the purposes of this section are those received within the relevant deadlines, and referred to in the following documents: (a) E/CN.4/2006/62, para. 24, and E/CN.4/2006/67, para. 22; (b) A/HRC/4/23, para. 14; (c) A/HRC/4/24, para. 9; (d) A/HRC/4/29, para. 47; (e) A/HRC/4/31, para. 24; (f) A/HRC/4/35/Add.3, para. 7; (g) A/HRC/6/15, para. 7; (h) A/HRC/7/6, annex; (i) A/HRC/7/8, para. 35; (j) A/HRC/8/10, para. 120, footnote 48; (k) A/62/301, paras. 27, 32, 38, 44 and 51; (l)

- A/HRC/10/16 and Corr.1, footnote 29; (m) A/HRC/11/6, annex; (n) A/HRC/11/8, para. 56; (o) A/HRC/11/9, para. 8, footnote 1; (p) A/HRC/12/21, para.2, footnote 1; (q) A/HRC/12/23, para. 12; (r) A/HRC/12/31, para. 1, footnote 2; (s) A/HRC/13/22/Add.4; (t) A/HRC/13/30, para. 49; (u) A/HRC/13/42, annex I; (v) A/HRC/14/25, para. 6, footnote 1; (w) A/HRC/14/31, para. 5, footnote 2; (x) A/HRC/14/ 46/Add.1; (y) A/HRC/15/31/Add.I, para. 6:- for list of responding States, see [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/water/iexpert/written\\_contributions.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/water/iexpert/written_contributions.htm); (z) A/HRC/15/32, para. 5.
- <sup>35</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 31.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., para. 32.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., para. 14.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., para. 19.
- <sup>39</sup> See OHCHR press release of 28 April 2010 and statement made by the Special Rapporteur at the 65th session of the UN General Assembly. The Special Rapporteur will present his report on the mission in June 2011.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid..
- <sup>41</sup> CRC/C/C/SGP/CO/2-3, paras. 29 and 30.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., paras. 35 and 36.
- <sup>43</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 26.
- <sup>44</sup> Economic and Social Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Capital punishment and implementation of safeguards guaranteeing protection the rights of those facing the death penalty, 18 December 2009, E/2010/10, paras. 34 and 36.
- <sup>45</sup> A/HRC/8/3/Add.1, pp. 352–359.
- <sup>46</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 25.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., para. 26.
- <sup>48</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, paras. 39 and 40.
- <sup>49</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 21.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid., para. 22.
- <sup>51</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Individual Observation concerning Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), 2010, Geneva, doc. No. (ILOLEX) 062010SGP029, 1st-5th paras.
- <sup>52</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Individual Direct Request concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), 2010, Geneva, doc. No. (ILOLEX) 092010SGP182, 3rd and 4th paras.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid., 5th para.
- <sup>54</sup> UNESCO, Communication and Information, Professional Journalistic Standards and Code of Ethics, South East Asia, Singapore.
- <sup>55</sup> CRC/C/ SGP/CO/2-3, paras. 3(e) and (f), 68, 69.
- <sup>56</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 23.
- <sup>57</sup> CRC/C/C/SGP/CO/2-3, paras. 46 and 47.
- <sup>58</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 15.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., para. 29.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., para. 23.
- <sup>61</sup> UNESCO, Communication and Information, Professional Journalistic Standards and Code of Ethics, South East Asia, Singapore .
- <sup>62</sup> See OHCHR press release of 28 April 2010 and statement made by the Special Rapporteur at the 65th session of the UN General Assembly.
- <sup>63</sup> UNESCO, Communication and Information, Professional Journalistic Standards and Code of Ethics, South East Asia, Singapore.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>65</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 20.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., para. 24.
- <sup>67</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, paras. 62 and 63.
- <sup>68</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Individual Direct Request concerning Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), 2010, Geneva, doc. No. (ILOLEX) 092010SGP138, 8th para.
- <sup>69</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 23.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., para. 29.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., para. 30.

<sup>72</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, paras. 54 and 55.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., paras. 58 and 59.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., paras. 52 and 53.

<sup>75</sup> UNFPA, State of the World Population 2006, Chapter 3, available at [http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2006/english/chapter\\_3/toil\\_and\\_tears.html](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2006/english/chapter_3/toil_and_tears.html).

<sup>76</sup> UNFPA, State of the World Population 2006, Chapter 3, available at [http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2006/english/chapter\\_3/toil\\_and\\_tears.html](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2006/english/chapter_3/toil_and_tears.html).

<sup>77</sup> UNFPA, State of the World Population 2006, Chapter 3, available at [http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2006/english/chapter\\_3/toil\\_and\\_tears.html](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2006/english/chapter_3/toil_and_tears.html).

<sup>78</sup> See OHCHR press release of 28 April 2010 and statement made by the Special Rapporteur at the 65th session of the UN General Assembly.

<sup>79</sup> CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3, para. 7.

<sup>80</sup> CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, para. 41(c).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., para. 69(f).

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