



STATE PARTY EXAMINATION OF SINGAPORE'S SECOND AND THIRD PERIODIC REPORT

56TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
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Singapore ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 4 November 1995. On 20 January 2011, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) examined the second and third combined periodic report of Singapore. It was last examined on 26 September 2003. The State party has reservations on articles 7, 9, 10, 22, 28 and 32.

Opening Comments

The delegation of Singapore was led by Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports. He was supported by representatives from the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of Education (MOE), the Permanent Mission in Geneva, the Attorney General's Chambers and Singapore Children's Society (SCS).

Dr. Balakrishnan thanked the Committee for its consideration of Singapore's second and third combined periodic report. He summarised the current situation in Singapore, stating that although Singapore was a young country with a population of five million, the GDP per capita had increased ten-fold since 2003 and fertility rates had gone down. Dr Balakrishnan explained that Singapore relied on human capital, as it had no natural resources; therefore, child-related policies and programmes were designed by the State to maximise the development potential of children. These policies and programmes aimed to provide security, safe education and the necessary physical infrastructure that empowered the child and considered the best interests of the child as paramount. Dr. Balakrishnan emphasised the importance of strong traditional family relationships, harmonious and cohesive communities and safe environments and stated that there were community-based approaches such as 'Many Helping Hands' to enable families to fulfil their responsibilities in the upbringing of their children.

In relation to the CRC, Dr. Balakrishnan noted legislative changes made since 2003, namely the Children and Young Persons Act, the Women's Charter, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Penal Code, as well as the Mental Capacity Act and the International Abduction Act.

With regard to healthcare, Dr. Balakrishnan reported that as of 2009, the infant mortality rate was 2.2 per one thousand live births and that over 90 per cent of children were immunised. Furthermore, fewer school-going children were overweight (9.5 per cent in 2006 as compared to 14 per cent in 1992). Singapore had placed increasing emphasis on the promotion of mental wellness of children through the elaboration of the National Mental Wellness group in 2006.

Dr Balakrishnan stated that more than 20 per cent of Singapore's budget was allocated to education. Singapore was recognised by the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) for its high-performing educational system, as it ranked fifth in reading, second in math, and fourth in science out of 65 countries. This assessment was carried out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The State had specialised schools for sports, the arts and vocational training. Dr. Balakrishnan reported that school drop-out rates had decreased from 5.3 per cent in 1997 to 1.2 per cent in 2009.

Dr Balakrishnan noted the collaborative partnership between the police, schools and social welfare institutions, to ensure timely intervention and care for victims of child abuse. The State had allocated more resources for children with disabilities and the State's early intervention policy provided education subsidies. Dr. Balakrishnan reported that 12,500 children with disabilities were attending schools; 60 per cent in mainstream schools and 40 per cent in specialised schools. The State had a master plan to provide medical care, education and special support to all these children.

Dr. Balakrishnan emphasised the importance of family several times. He reiterated its significance and noted examples of campaigns that promoted good parenting, such as the 'Dads for Life' movement, which raised awareness about the role of fathers in parenting. Consultative NGO bodies, such as the National Family Council, had also been instrumental in similar campaigns, which actively promoted family life. Moreover, social assistance schemes provided support to families with financial difficulties. To conclude, Dr Balakrishnan affirmed the State belief in promoting diversity by stating that as a multi-racial, multi-religious community, the State encouraged cross-cultural exchange. The Inaugural Youth Olympic Games exemplified the State's commitment to engaging youth in culture, sports and educational activities.

Mr. Koompraphant, the co-Country Rapporteur, thanked the head of delegation for his opening remarks. He appreciated the State's campaign to promote the role of fathers in parenting and noted the State's efforts to maintain high standards of physical health and education. He remarked that the initiative to amend the Children and Young Persons Act in 2010 was the first step towards safeguarding children. Mr. Koompraphant emphasised the integral role of guardians, parents and the family generally to protect children, as this complied with articles 5, 13 and 27 of the CRC. He also commented that the voices of stateless and foreign children needed to be heard. To conclude, Mr Koompraphant asked how the State collected data on child abuse and neglect, and whether it came from case managers or monitoring mechanisms.

General Measures of Implementation

Legislation

The Committee welcomed legislative changes made by the State but noted that steps needed to be taken to ensure they were in line with the CRC. The Committee asked whether the Children and Young Persons Act enabled children to express themselves in accordance with article 12 of the CRC. The Committee asked whether the children's opinions had been sought during the review of the Children and Young Persons Act. It also asked how the Internal Security Act would affect children and whether children between the ages of 16 and 18 or 14 and 18 were considered as adults.

The delegation explained that the Internal Security Act aimed to combat terrorism and espionage, but that children were neither targeted nor detained under this Act. It added that international treaties that were ratified by the State were not self-executing at the domestic level.

Dissemination and training

The Committee was aware of the State's great achievements in economic and social development and recognised the continued pursuit of robust social policies and judicial measures, but asked how children were viewed in socio-cultural ethnic groups and by public institutions. The State Party report and the Written Replies to the List of Issues gave the impression that there was a paternalistic attitude towards children.

The Committee also noted the importance of protecting children and opening up the space for them to grow and be recognised from birth, through birth registration, and asked whether parents and workers, aside from children and teachers, were being educated on the CRC. The delegation explained that judicial officers were trained in how to address child cases and how to take into account the views of children.

Monitoring and implementation

The Committee asked whether there was an independent monitoring mechanism that monitored the implementation of the CRC and how this mechanism was evaluated. It inquired about the coordination and implementation of the CRC and asked for information regarding the mandate and structure of the Inter-Ministry Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (IMC-CRC). The Committee also asked the delegation to explain how the 'Many Helping Hands Approach' was related to the IMC-CRC and how the State guaranteed public involvement within the 'Many Helping Hands Approach' as cooperation between the State and civil society was needed.

The delegation explained that voluntary welfare organisations had advocated for children for many years and that the IMC-CRC represented the different ministries who ultimately have to give effect to the fact that the State is a party to the CRC. The IMC-CRC was answerable to the Parliament and those advocating on behalf of children.

Reservations

The Committee asked for the delegation's comments on its declarations on articles 12, 15, 16 and 17 and its reservations on articles 7, 9 and 10. The Committee said it would like all the reservations to be lifted, especially article 7, on the right to nationality, which allowed a mother to pass nationality to a child. The Committee observed that the Labour Law (amended in 2004) raised the minimum employment age from 14 to 15 years and light work from 12 to 13 years. The Committee noted that the amendment to the minimum age of employment and the ratification of the ILO Minimum Age Convention in 2005 should help to raise Singapore's reservation to article 32.

The Committee asked about the State's plans to ratify other core international human rights conventions, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC). The Committee noted that the 2007 amendment to the Penal Code provided ways to combat sexual abuse of children and enabled the ratification of OPSC.

The delegation explained that its reservations on articles 7, 9, 10 and 22 were related to the fact that Singapore was a very small, densely populated island (7,000 people per square kilometre). The State could not afford to offer free education to foreign children hence it had a reservation on article 28. Also, despite the reservation to article 32, the State was substantially compliant with this provision as its practices involved part-time employment for children.

The Committee noted the legislative changes made in relation to nationality and age of employment but continued to ask for the reservations to be lifted. The Committee reiterated its inquiry about articles 12 through 17 and stated that most analysts did not differentiate between declarations and reservations. The delegation explained that the State had lodged declarations, not reservations, on these articles to explicate that the State and the Committee had differing perspectives on how these rights were to be applied and exercised within the context of Singapore's society.

The role of non-governmental organisations

The Committee asked to what extent the State allowed NGOs to interfere in children's lives. Specifically, the Committee asked whether NGOs were consulted before programmes were implemented and whether their opinions were taken into consideration. In other words, was there a participatory approach and were NGOs accessible to the government.

The delegation explained that NGOs were referred to as Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWO). VWOs offered direct services to the children and assisted in the creation of the National Council of Social Services (NCSS) that acted as the coordinating body for VWOs. The delegation emphasised that the NCSS offered an independent voice that allowed children to be heard and that the Singapore Children's Society had after-school programmes where children could participate in different activities.

The Committee noted that the Written Replies had stated that the NCSS participated actively in the Inter-Ministry Committee on Dysfunctional Families (IMC-DF) but had no linkages with the Inter-Ministry Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This created the perception that the NCSS associated itself with particular problems and created a welfare paradigm rather than a positive children's paradigm. The delegation explained that the IMC-DF was a government committee associated with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports.

The Committee asked for a description on the procedure of setting up an NGO in the Singapore and asked whether the State Party had the power to check the work of the association. The Committee also asked whether the NCSS was an NGO or part of the government since 50 per cent of the funding for approved projects came from the government. The delegation explained that the NCSS worked closely with the government but was not a part of the government. The State Party website provided information on how an NGO was established within the State.

International cooperation

The Committee appreciated the State's contributions to peacekeeping missions and other issues but said it lacked information regarding the Singapore's Overseas Development Aid (ODA) statistics such as those published by the OECD and UNICEF. The Committee asked about the designated amount of ODA and whether a portion was directed to programmes for children. The Committee acknowledged the State's contributions to UNICEF, but noted that these were small in comparison to other developed countries.

The delegation explained that the State made voluntary contributions, which were reviewed regularly. When the Committee asked what percentage of the State's GDP was earmarked international cooperation, the delegation stated that it could not find an article in the CRC, related to a state's financial contributions to international cooperation, that would make this question relevant. The Committee explained that article 4 requested state parties to contribute, as much as possible, their own resources to the implementation of the rights recognised in the CRC; when states were unable to do so, article 4 specified that they should seek assistance through international cooperation. This meant that those in a position to assist others were required to help those who may not be able to utilise their resources to the maximum capacity. The delegation said it had no mandate from the State party to respond to the Committee and that it would need to seek legal advice regarding article 4 of the CRC.

Definition of the Child

The Committee thought the definition of the child had not been applied systematically. It also noted ambivalence in the definition of the child in Children and Young Persons Act, as it defined a 'child' as a person under 15 and a 'young person' as someone between the ages of 15 and 16. The Committee asked for the definition of a person between the ages of 16 and 18. It also asked how the State defined 'youth', as the activities of the National Youth Council typically considered 'youth' to be between the ages of 15 and 24. The Committee urged the State to consider a uniform definition of a child that was in agreement with article 1 of the CRC.

General Principles

Non-discrimination

The Committee asked why non-citizens were denied equal treatment and access to services and why children who were born out of wedlock were discriminated against by virtue of their unwed mothers' status. The Committee pointed out that the unwed mothers from low-income communities were denied State subsidies. The committee also asked about the status and benefits of children born to foreign workers and those born to Singaporean women partnered with non-Singaporean low-wage workers. The Committee inquired why girls in Muslim communities were allowed to marry below the age of 18 and wanted to know how the State dealt with Muslim communities that observed Islamic *Sharia* law.

The delegation guaranteed that all Singaporean children had the rights to quality life and education and stated that no one in Singapore was denied access to health because of who they were or where they came from. Public healthcare was heavily subsidised and publicly funded; social services, such as child care subsidies, were available to all children. The delegation explained that the Administration of Muslim Law Act governed marriages between Muslim couples and that the legal marriage age, for Muslim girls, was raised from 16 to 18 years. In the case of marriages involving minor couples, the couples were referred to counsellors.

Best interest of the child

The Committee asked about the Inter-Ministry Committee on Dysfunctional Families (IMC-DF), which included families at risk or too vulnerable to meet their responsibilities. The Committee noted that the terms ‘dysfunctional’ and ‘Beyond Parental Control’ almost connoted a failure and said these terms stigmatise children or affect their inner feelings. The Committee asked for an explanation of the aims of the IMC-DF and the National Family Council established in 2008. The Committee also noted that children could be removed from their families by obtaining voluntary consent from the parents and asked whether this separation was necessary and in the best interest of the child.

The delegation stated that the principle of the ‘best interest of the child’ could be found in Children and Young Persons Act, the Guardianship of Infants Act, the Women’s Charter, and the Evidence Act. There were court appointed counsellors for children who interviewed children to determine their views and individualised care plans that considered children’s views. The delegation explained that it had decided to use the terminology ‘Beyond Parental Control’ and ‘Dysfunctional Families’ because it was looking at families with very high risks, but would welcome the Committee’s advice regarding better terms. The delegation reported that the number of complaints of Beyond Parental Control had gone down.

Respect for the view of the child

The Committee noted that from reading the State Party report, it seemed the rights to be heard and participate had been restricted to certain judicial spheres — those linked with family law regarding aspects of divorce, guardianship and visiting rights. The Committee wanted to know whether children’s views were sought and assessed in these procedures and whether they had any weight. The Committee acknowledged the State’s effort to increase the right to participate but pointed out that adults – rather than children – organised many of these initiatives.

The delegation stated that the judges took children’s views into account and made decisions in the best interest of the child. The Committee noted that in the case of Beyond Parental Control, the right of the parent to be heard was available but not of the child. The delegation explained that there was no legal mandate for judges to listen to the views of the child and stated that in the case of an appeal the judge provided a ground of decision for not hearing the child.

Civil Rights and Freedoms

Access to appropriate information

The Committee asked whether children’s privacy and their right to receive appropriate information were protected. It also asked how children and adolescents, who were sensitive to issues such as health, were protected in their private, public life and mass media. The Committee wanted to know what mechanisms were used to help parents identify the positive and dangerous aspects of new technologies and whether the State punished the media when it failed to respect children through codes or media reports that led to discrimination.

The delegation explained that the media had strategies to teach parents and children about safe usage. Additionally, internet service providers were mandated to offer internet filters to subscribers and families could use family access networks to better manage children’s usage.

Corporal punishment

The Committee raised the issue of canning, as a form of punishment that concerned children between the ages of 16 and 18 and noted that Singapore had ministerial regulations and guidelines on the use of corporal punishment. The Committee explained that since the adoption of the CRC and the United Nations Study on Violence against Children (2006), the area of corporal punishment had been identified as an issue of inhuman and degrading treatment. The Committee encouraged the State to reconsider its position, as the Committee disregarded corporal punishment as a non-violent or corrective form.

The delegation acknowledged the views of the Committee and noted the differences in philosophy, as the State allowed corporal punishment in schools, juvenile detention homes and prisons as a form of disciplinary action.

Nationality

The Committee noted that children born *after* 2004 had access to citizenship but those born prior did not. It stated that the law ought to cover all children and asked the delegation to comment on this lack of objectivity. The Committee asked about the State's intentions to review nationality policies for stateless children and about the status of children born to non-Singaporean women seeking asylum within the State. While all Singaporean citizens were registered at birth, a small number of children, born from unmarried women with no nationality or citizenship, were not registered. These stateless children could not access benefits or education.

The delegation cited geographical constraints as a barrier to automatic citizenship and explained that children born before 2004 could apply for citizenship; each case would be assessed on its own merit. In the case of non-Singaporean women seeking asylum, the Immigration Checkpoint Authority (ICA) would allow temporary stay on a case-by-case basis. The ICA worked with UNHCR to help the person reach a third country party within the shortest possible time. The ICA granted temporary access to minors and referred them to the MCYS for provision of accommodation and support. When asked whether the child was granted or denied nationality the delegation explained that if the child had foreign parents, and the home country allowed nationality by birth, then the child would have a foreign nationality but he/she would not be given automatic citizenship by the State.

The Committee asked for statistics of those who registered for citizenship and those that were denied. The delegation said that it had no statistics, because in most citizenship cases (before 2004) the foreigners had dual citizenship. The delegation was not aware of any child rendered stateless because of this provision.

Child abuse

The Committee asked how agencies and professionals identified intra-family sexual abuse and whether it was mandatory to report child abuse.

The delegation stated that medical practitioners were obligated to report if they suspected child abuse and anyone who reported child abuse would not be liable to criminal liability. Additionally, there were programmes for developing child-safe environments and almost all children's agencies had received state training.

Family Environment and Alternative Care

Parental responsibilities

The Committee asked whether there were services to enhance parents' ability to foster good relationships with their children.

The delegation said there were accessible family service centres that provided parenting programmes and support to help parents develop their parenting capacity.

Alternative care and waiting lists

The Committee asked whether there was an early detection system that monitored children with social and emotional difficulties before judging whether they should be placed in alternative institutions. The Committee also wanted to know whether there were studies that examined the root causes of children 'beyond parental control' and whether children 'beyond parental control' were more prevalent in specific areas or among certain social groups. The Committee encouraged a research study on Beyond Parental Control because of the terminology and the way the program was established.

The delegation said there was no separate independent body to monitor children's issues but there were existing avenues for children, youths or organisations to raise complaints.

Illicit transfer and non-return

The Committee asked the delegation if there were any provisions about children being taken out of the country by family members and whether the State had signed any bilateral agreements with countries to ensure that abducted children would be returned to Singapore.

The delegation explained that in September 2010, the State passed the Child Abduction Act to operationalise the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction which would come into force in March 2011. Additionally, the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports had an established central authority that would provide assistance in such cases.

Adoptions

The Committee asked whether there were cases where families purchased Chinese children and cases of children in Singapore being adopted by American families. The Committee noted that the practice of adoption by American families was not in line with the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption. The Committee also asked whether the State would ratify the Hague Convention.

Basic Health and Welfare

Children with disabilities

The Committee noted that children with disabilities were isolated in special schools that were funded by the Ministry of Education but run by Voluntary Welfare Organizations. The Committee asked how the State controlled the quality of education in the special schools and stated that children with disabilities should have their own law as they were a special category. The Committee asked how children with disabilities exercised their freedom to participate and access information and what measures were being taken to ensure their rights. The Committee said it was discriminatory for children with disabilities to not be included in the Compulsory Education Act and stated that corporal punishment should not be practiced within these schools.

The delegation said that the Compulsory Education Act was for mainstream national schools not special schools for children with disabilities. Children with disabilities were exempt from

the Compulsory Education Act because under this Act it was a criminal offence not to place a child in a national primary school and the State did not want to criminalise parents with disabled children. The delegation emphasised that exclusion from the Compulsory Education Act was not exemption from compulsory education.

Adolescent health

The Committee said the State needed to strengthen adolescent health, counselling and suicide prevention as the physical and mental health of adolescent's required greater attention. The Committee asked for more information on why suicide and sexual relations between two 15-year-old children were considered crimes. The Committee also wanted to know what systemic measures had been taken to improve mental health of children and adolescents within the State and whether there were adolescent friendly clinics, mobile clinics and specialised clinics. The Committee remarked that children between 10 and 19 were experiencing rising STI, HIV/AIDS and suicide rates.

With regard to clinics, the delegation explained that there were youth-friendly clinics. The delegation affirmed that there was a rising trend of children with STI, HIV/AIDS, and attempted suicide, but each was unique. The delegation expressed that the mother to child transmission in the last two to three years had been zero and there were about ten children with HIV/AIDS in the 10 to 15 year age group; HIV numbers were small because of the State's approach, which included antenatal and HIV/AIDS screening as a standard of health care. Furthermore, HIV/AIDS awareness and education was now a part of the physical education curriculum. The delegation said that according to the Women's Charter sex between a 15 year old boy and a 15 year old girl was a criminal offence but the State only prosecuted when an older male had sex with a younger girl; this was an effort to protect women. An attempt at suicide was an offence because the State wanted to extend its ability to intervene, but the delegation noted that there were only 10 to 16 suicides per year. The delegation viewed suicide as a broader mental health issue and noted that the National Mental Health Workgroup for Children and Adolescents helped to promote mental well being by equipping children with essential knowledge and skills to build self esteem and positive mental health.

Breastfeeding

The Committee asked about the status of breastfeeding and recalled that there were many recommendations in 2003 on how to promote breastfeeding during the first six months of infancy and also encouragement for the adoption the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. The committee noted that there were no baby friendly hospitals.

The delegation reported that 22 per cent of young mothers were exclusively breastfeeding for the first six months but that breastfeeding decreased after the fourth month. The delegation also noted that every maternity hospital promoted breastfeeding through a lactation consultant who counselled mothers on breastfeeding. Additionally, maternity leave had been increased to four months and the State supported the aims of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

Drug and alcohol issues

The Committee noted that Singapore had a strict zero-tolerance policy for drugs and drug trafficking. It asked the State to elaborate on the programmes that dealt with addicts and prevention measures available for children.

The delegation explained that the Central Narcotics Bureau focused on drug prevention and provided regular talks in schools. Presenters included experienced drug experts and drug busters. One programme, 'Clubs against Drugs', encouraged youth to stay drug free.

Harmful traditional practices

The Committee asked whether harmful traditional practices still existed within the State, e.g. female genital mutilation, preferential care of male children, forced feeding of women, early marriage, and crimes of honour, etc.

The delegation said that none of these traditions were supported or practised in Singapore

Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities

Education

The Committee noted that the State had an overly competitive educational system which could result in stress, suicide or children beyond parental control. The Committee also noted that Malay students were not performing as well as other students and suggested the state make small adjustments to the special temporary programmes.

The delegation assured that schools worked to teach students how to manage stress. The Ministry of Education was working with professionals to ensure that stress from family homes and relationships were addressed through character building and through developing a sense of citizenship responsibility. If children were unable to fulfil the required aptitudes, they enrolled in special schools or programmes within schools designed to help weaker students to improve. The Primary Education Review and Implementation Committee worked to improve the detection of aptitudes in primary school. The delegation also reported that Singapore was advocating for a different teaching approach, which took into account the variety of languages at home to help children succeed in school.

Leisure, recreation and cultural activities

The Committee asked whether children had access to culture and how the State was working to ensure children had playtime, leisure and physical space. The Committee also asked whether there were materials in different languages that addressed the diversity of Singapore and whether measures were taken to ensure that the mass media represented different cultures. The committee said was important that there was no outright assimilation which could make minorities invisible.

The delegation said that schools had sports facilities to enable children to participate in sports and there were State initiatives to create green spaces for children to play in. The State recognised its diversity by requiring each child to learn two languages (English and their mother tongue) and said there was a number of cultural co-curricular activities open to all.

Special Protection Measures

Child labour

The delegation explained that in 2004 the Employment Act was amended and raised the minimum age of work from 14 to 15 years and light work from 12 to 13 years. Additionally, there were special protection measures regarding the hours, time and the type of work that children between 13 and 16 years could obtain. Persons between 16 and 18 years were not allowed to work in hazardous occupations.

The Committee asked whether the Employment Act, which allowed children to do light work at 13 years conflicted with the compulsory school age of 15 years. The delegation explained that 98 per cent of children in Singapore completed 10 years of school and 93 per cent continued to post-secondary education or vocational training. The Committee noted that 30 per cent of the population was not Singaporean therefore the statistic of 98 per cent did not cover all the children within the State. The delegation explained that foreign workers did not bring their children into the State; therefore the State was not responsible for their education.

The Committee referred to CEDAW to highlight the difficulties of women engaged in domestic work and to point out that there was no clear minimum age for domestic work. The Committee asked how the State monitored child labour.

Sale of children, prostitution and pornography

The Committee emphasised that children up to the age of 18 needed to be protected against all forms of harmful or damaging work and asked whether there were effective and systematic monitoring mechanisms to safe-guard children. It noted that the law regarding child pornography and immoral scenes involving children in films had lowered the age down to 16 years. The Committee also asked why the State had not overcome the sale of children and prostitution and whether the State intended to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

Juvenile justice

The Committee asked for more information on the court diversionary measures and what measures were taken to deal with minor crimes. The Committee asked how the State justified maintaining the low age of criminal responsibility and how children, ages 10 to 18 years, would be treated for committing grave crimes. The Committee wondered why the State needed a penal system to cover protection measures when dealing with children between 7 and 10 years who had committed criminal offences.

The delegation explained that the low criminal responsibility age was supposed to enable the State to intervene quickly and effectively and no child below the age of 11 was prosecuted. The delegation explained that juvenile justice focused on restorative and rehabilitative aspects of justice. Juvenile courts had power conferred to them by Children and Young Persons Act and these courts had a range of options to deal with children, e.g. the courts had could involve family members in the rehabilitation of a child.

Concluding Remarks

Ms. Agnes Aidoo, co-Rapporteur, acknowledged and commended the high achievement of the State both economically and in areas of social development and health. The Committee noted the importance placed on values and principles, such as family life and said that the Committee would stand alert to ensure that these principles did not become a problem for further implementation of the rights of the child. The Committee would take into account the State Party's concern that limited geographic area had informed its policy and would also bear in mind that the State had no natural resources. Ms. Aidoo encouraged Singapore to review its reservations, especially those to which it was substantially compliant, and to consider a uniform definition of the child. Aidoo noted that an adolescent health policy would be beneficial to the State and asked the State to look at the situation of foreign children and find a solution that ensured that their rights were protected.

The head of delegation thanked the co-Rapporteur for her comments. The State was unable to

lift all its reservations despite it being substantially compliant. Dr. Balakrishnan reiterated that Singapore's geographical size as a constraint as well as being multi-racial and young. He said the State was focused on health, education, mental health, and lowering rates of delinquency and crime. Dr. Balakrishnan invited the Committee to visit Singapore in an unofficial capacity.