

**1. What is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)?**

The UNCRC is a treaty which comprehensively provides for the rights of children, and sets standards on the provision of healthcare, education, legal and social services for children.

There are three Optional Protocols to the UNCRC. They are the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC), Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC) and Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure.

An Inter-Ministry Committee, co-ordinated by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), monitors Singapore's progress in implementing the UNCRC.

**2. What is the Committee on the Rights of the Child?**

The Committee is the body of 18 independent experts that monitors the implementation of the UNCRC by its State Parties. It also monitors State Parties' implementation of two Optional Protocols to the Convention, the OPAC and OPSC.

(Source: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx>)

**3. What are Singapore's obligations under the UNCRC?**

Singapore acceded to the UNCRC in October 1995. This reflects our commitment to undertake appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures to give effect to the rights recognised under the Convention. It is also a commitment to work in the best interests of the child when designing and administering programmes and services.

Singapore ratified the OPAC in December 2008, which came into force in January 2009. OPAC comprises 13 articles and seeks to ensure that children below the age of 18 years are not recruited into armed forces and do not take part in direct hostilities.

All States Parties, including Singapore, must report to the Committee on the measures they have adopted which give effect to the rights recognised in the UNCRC and the progress made on the enjoyment of those rights.

#### 4. What are concluding observations?

Concluding observations are observations and recommendations issued by a treaty body after consideration of a State Party’s report. Concluding observations refer both to positive aspects of a State’s implementation of the treaty and areas where the treaty body recommends that further action needs to be taken by the State. The treaty bodies are committed to issuing concluding observations which are concrete, focused and implementable and are paying increasing attention to measures to ensure effective follow-up to their concluding observations. The Committee on the Rights of the Child is the treaty body that considers and issues concluding observations for UNCRC periodic reports. (Source: [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TBGlossary.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TBGlossary.aspx) ).

The last set of concluding observations made by the Committee are addressed in the current report.

#### 5. What are some of the key areas of progress mentioned in Singapore’s 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> UNCRC Periodic Report?

Some key areas of progress are stated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Key Areas of Progress on the Rights of the Child**

Area	Key Progress
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced the Children and Young Persons Act, Administration of Muslim Law Act, Women’s Charter, and Child Development Co-Savings Act.</li> <li>- Enacted new legislation, such as the Protection from Harassment Act, Prevention of Human Trafficking Act, Family Justice Act and Early Childhood Development Centres Act.</li> </ul>
General Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced practices and legislation in line with the principle that the child’s best interests are a primary consideration.</li> </ul>

Area	Key Progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Made strides in building an inclusive society through the third Enabling Masterplan and ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</li> <li>- Strengthened efforts to deepen racial harmony by signing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.</li> </ul>
Civil Rights and Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support for children's expression of views within measures prescribed by law.</li> </ul>
Violence against Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced assessment tools and frameworks for child protection.</li> <li>- Intensified public education to raise awareness of family violence and strengthened help channels for persons exposed to family violence.</li> </ul>
Family Environment and Alternative Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced marriage and parenthood measures to better support parents in having and caring for their children.</li> <li>- Increased provision of affordable and quality centre-based infant care and childcare, with additional support for lower-income families.</li> <li>- Enhanced protection of the interests of children affected by divorce through introduction of divorce-related specialised services and programmes.</li> <li>- For children who cannot remain with their natural families, expanded alternative family-based care options such as foster care, and diversified residential care options to cater to children's different needs.</li> <li>- Introduced interventions towards family preservation and reunification, for families whose children were exposed to child abuse and neglect.</li> <li>- Reviewed the programme for children who are assessed to be beyond parental control to emphasise the responsibility of the family and the role of community-based support.</li> <li>- Ratified the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and enacted the International Child Abduction Act to strengthen efforts to prevent illicit transfers and non-return of children.</li> </ul>
Disability, Basic Health and Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extending the right of compulsory education to all Singaporean Primary 1 children with moderate to severe special educational needs from 2019.</li> <li>- Set up a continuum of support programmes for children with disabilities to provide them with a conducive and inclusive learning environment.</li> <li>- Enhanced mental health/wellness measures.</li> </ul>

Area	Key Progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved social security schemes.</li> <li>- Better protected children from drug abuse through amending the Misuse of Drugs Act to target those who recruit young or vulnerable persons into drug trafficking, and establishing an Inter-Agency Taskforce to tackle drug abuse.</li> </ul>
Education, Leisure and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Established more diversified education pathways to cater for children's varying ability levels.</li> <li>- Changed scoring system for Primary School Leaving Examination, which will take effect from 2021, to engender a less stressful and more creative learning environment for students.</li> <li>- Set up the Early Childhood Development Agency to improve quality of child care.</li> </ul>
Special Protection Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthened legislation that deals with exploitation through enactment of the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act.</li> <li>- Enhanced measures to combat trafficking with accession to the UN Protocol on Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and ratification of ASEAN Convention Against TIP.</li> <li>- Built up capabilities for early detection of child trafficking among enforcement officers.</li> <li>- Better support for children during investigations with appropriate adult support and victim care.</li> <li>- Introduced more upstream measures to prevent youth from falling into crime.</li> <li>- Implemented a triage system for young offenders to be assessed for timely intervention and support.</li> <li>- Expanded rehabilitation options for young offenders through broadened diversionary programmes to steer youth away from the criminal justice system.</li> </ul>