

**AGENDA ITEM 11 OF THE RECONVENED 64TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
ON NARCOTIC DRUGS**

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON ARBITRARY DETENTION

Madam Chair,

As stated in the joint statement just delivered by the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation, the recommendations in the study on arbitrary detention relating to drug policies posted on the website of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, go beyond the mandate of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to investigate cases of deprivation of liberty imposed arbitrarily or inconsistently with international standards.

The study claims that there is no evidence that practices at compulsory drug detention centres result in the successful treatment of drug dependent persons. This is not true. Singapore's evidence-informed rehabilitation and aftercare approach is a crucial pillar of our comprehensive drug control approach, which has enabled us to sustain a low and stable rate of drug abuse over the years. We provide a host of interventions and support to rehabilitate drug abusers and help them reintegrate into society. These interventions are guided by international best practices. The decrease in the two-year recidivism rate for drug abusers in Singapore, from 67.4% for the 1996 release cohort to 25.9% for the 2018 release cohort shows its effectiveness.

Further, the study claims that imposing the capital punishment for drug related offences is incompatible with international standards on the use of capital punishment. We do not agree.

First, international law does not prohibit the use of capital punishment. There is no international consensus against the use of capital punishment when applied according to the due process of law and judicial safeguards.

Second, capital punishment can effectively deter serious crimes that cause grave harm to others and society, including trafficking large quantities of drugs. This is true in Singapore's experience. For example, in the four years after the mandatory death penalty was introduced in Singapore for the trafficking of more than 1,200 grammes of opium, the average net weight of opium trafficked into Singapore fell by 66%.

Third, capital punishment should be viewed beyond the perspective of the person receiving the sentence. Drug traffickers and the drugs which they traffic cause immense harm to drug abusers and their families. We need to protect our society; and protect people from becoming victims. Our people deserve the right to live in a safe environment free from drug abuse.

Madam Chair,

Singapore believes that each country has its unique circumstances and norms, and the sovereign right to implement drug control policies most appropriate for its local context. We will continue to adopt evidence-informed policies that has worked well for us.

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