

31st Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

National Statement by Mr PUAH Kok Keong
Deputy Secretary (Policy), Ministry of Home Affairs

Mr Chair

1. Singapore congratulates you on your appointment as Chair of the 31st CCPCJ.

Threat Landscape

2. Transnational crime continues to pose significant challenges for all countries. In particular, global financial crime has risen in scale, complexity and pervasiveness across jurisdictions in recent years.

3. Globally, financial losses caused by scams amount to trillions of dollars every year. This threat will continue to grow as criminal groups profit lucratively from their illegal activities and develop more sophisticated modus operandi. Yet, the global asset recovery rates remain low, with only a small fraction of illicit monies, around 0.7% as estimated by the Financial Action Task Force, was recovered by law enforcement agencies.

4. This underscores the need for all of us to step up our domestic law enforcement and crime prevention efforts.

Singapore's Crime Situation and Approach to Tackling/Preventing Crime

5. Singapore's approach to tackling transnational crime is underpinned by our strong emphasis on the rule of law, trusted public institutions, and effective implementation of crime-prevention and rehabilitation strategies.

6. Our approach has yielded positive outcomes.

- (a) The 2020 Gallup Global Law and Order Report ranked Singapore first, for the seventh year running. In that survey, 97%

of Singapore residents said they felt safe walking alone at night, the highest in the world.

- (b) Our 2-year recidivism rate¹ for the 2019 release cohort of offenders released from the prisons is 20%, a 30-year low and amongst the lowest internationally.

7. While physical crime is on the decline, the number of scams in Singapore has surged. Of these scam cases, nine in 10 were transnational in nature.

International Cooperation

8. In dealing with the threat of transnational crime, seamless international and regional law enforcement cooperation, and partnerships with the private sector, are crucial to effectively disrupt criminal networks, trace and seize the proceeds of crime, and strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets, in line with the Kyoto Declaration and the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. To this end, Singapore worked with INTERPOL to initiate the formation of the INTERPOL Global Financial Crime Task Force to strengthen international cooperation in combating financial crime.

10. Singapore will be assuming the Presidency for the Financial Action Task Force on 1 July 2022. We are committed to spearheading global efforts in strengthening FATF's framework for asset recovery to deprive criminals of their proceeds and fostering closer cooperation and galvanise a coordinated global response against financial crimes.

11. In addition, Singapore supports the inclusion of cyber scams within the scope of the proposed Cybercrime Convention discussed at the UN Ad-Hoc Committee. This will demonstrate the international community's resolve and commitment to tackling this threat.

¹ Recidivism rate is defined as the percentage of local offenders under the custody of the Singapore Prison Service, who were subsequently detained or sentenced to imprisonment or day reporting order within two years of release into the community.

Conclusion

12. In conclusion, let me reiterate Singapore's support for the Kyoto Declaration, and to the work of the CCPCJ. We also reaffirm our commitment to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and the UN Convention Against Corruption, and express our full support to the review process of both treaties.

13. We will continue to work closely with the UNODC, FATF, INTERPOL and the international community to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against transnational crime.

14. Thank you.